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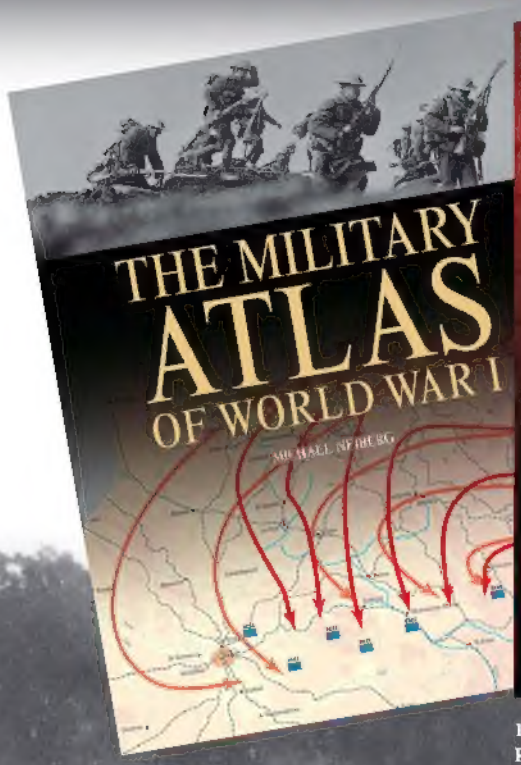

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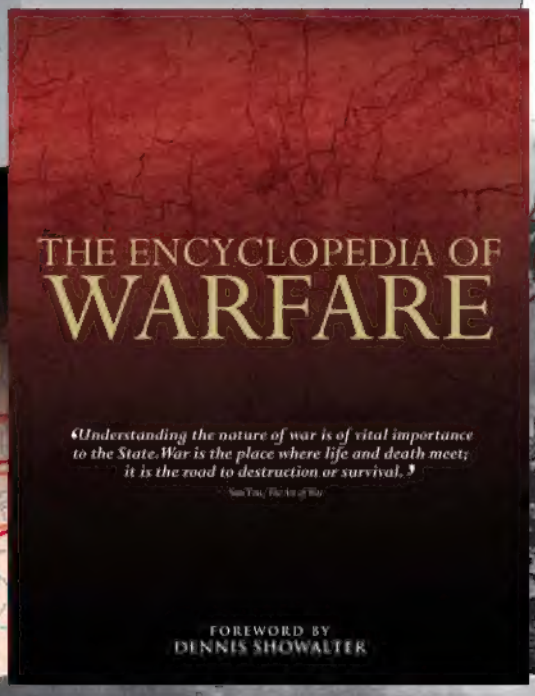
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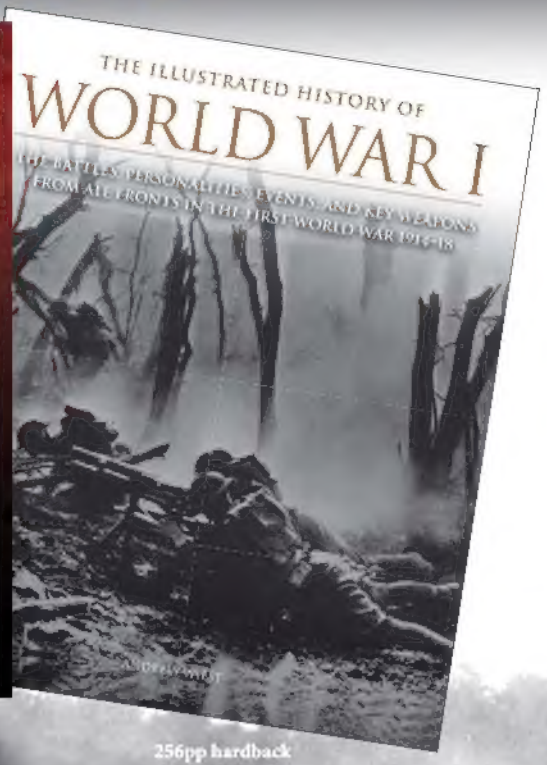

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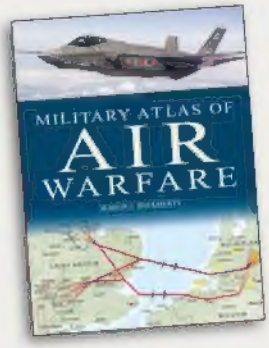

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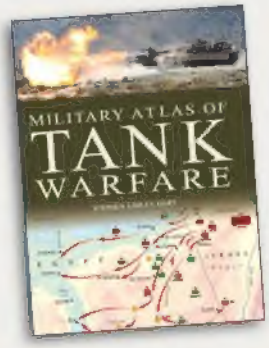

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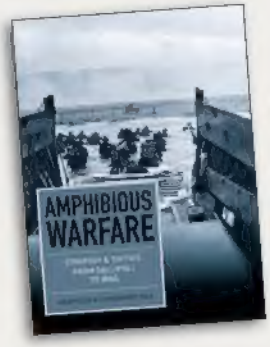

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HISTORY of WAR

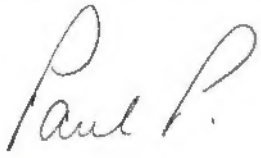
Welcome

Congratulations! You've grabbed yourself a copy of the very first issue of *History Of War*, a magazine dedicated to the armed conflicts that have been fought over the millennia. You've clearly got an interest and a passion for military history – and we intend to satisfy that thirst for knowledge by presenting you with a raft of features, news and reviews written by renowned historians and authors.

Why launch a magazine about war right now? No one could have failed to notice that 2014 marks the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, but it's also the 75th anniversary of the start of the Second World War. In this issue, we take an in-depth look at how Germany invaded Europe in 1914, utilising its Schlieffen Plan (page 16), and examine the titanic struggle in the Far East when the US fought the Japanese in the Philippines and on Iwo Jima in one of the bloodiest battles of WWII (page 50). But there is so much more to the history of combat than the aforementioned conflicts. We will be covering wars from around the globe and throughout time; in this issue, we look at Alexander's victory at Gaugamela, Rome's Generals, the best Vietnam War films and Spanish galleon the Galera Real.

And if you like what you read, why not subscribe? Check out our fantastic money-saving offer on page 44.

Paul Pettengale *Editorial Director*
paul.pettengale@anthem-publishing.com



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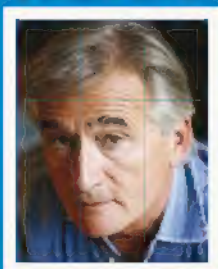

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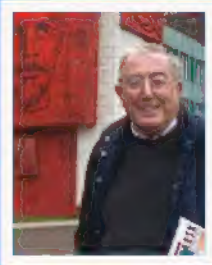

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is a seasoned journalist who has worked on newpapers in New York, Paris and Washington. He is currently a columnist and Associate Editor of *The Times* in London, and has written books including *Agent Zigzag* and *Operation Mincemeat*.

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HOW KAISER BILL'S GERMANY STORMED INTO WAR IN 1914

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Germany strikes west

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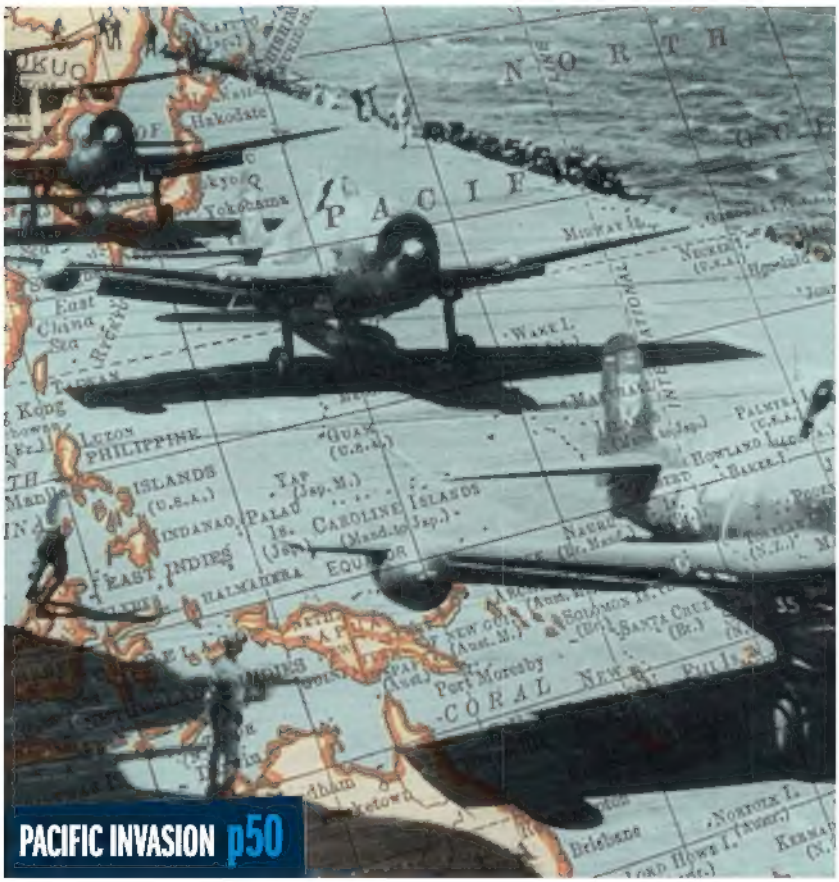

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THEO WIPERS TIMES. OR SALIENT NEWS.

Editorial.

HISTORY of WAR

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WAR in FOCUS

DUGOUTS IN THE TRENCHES, PLOEGSTEERT, FLANDERS, BELGIUM

Taken **January 1917**

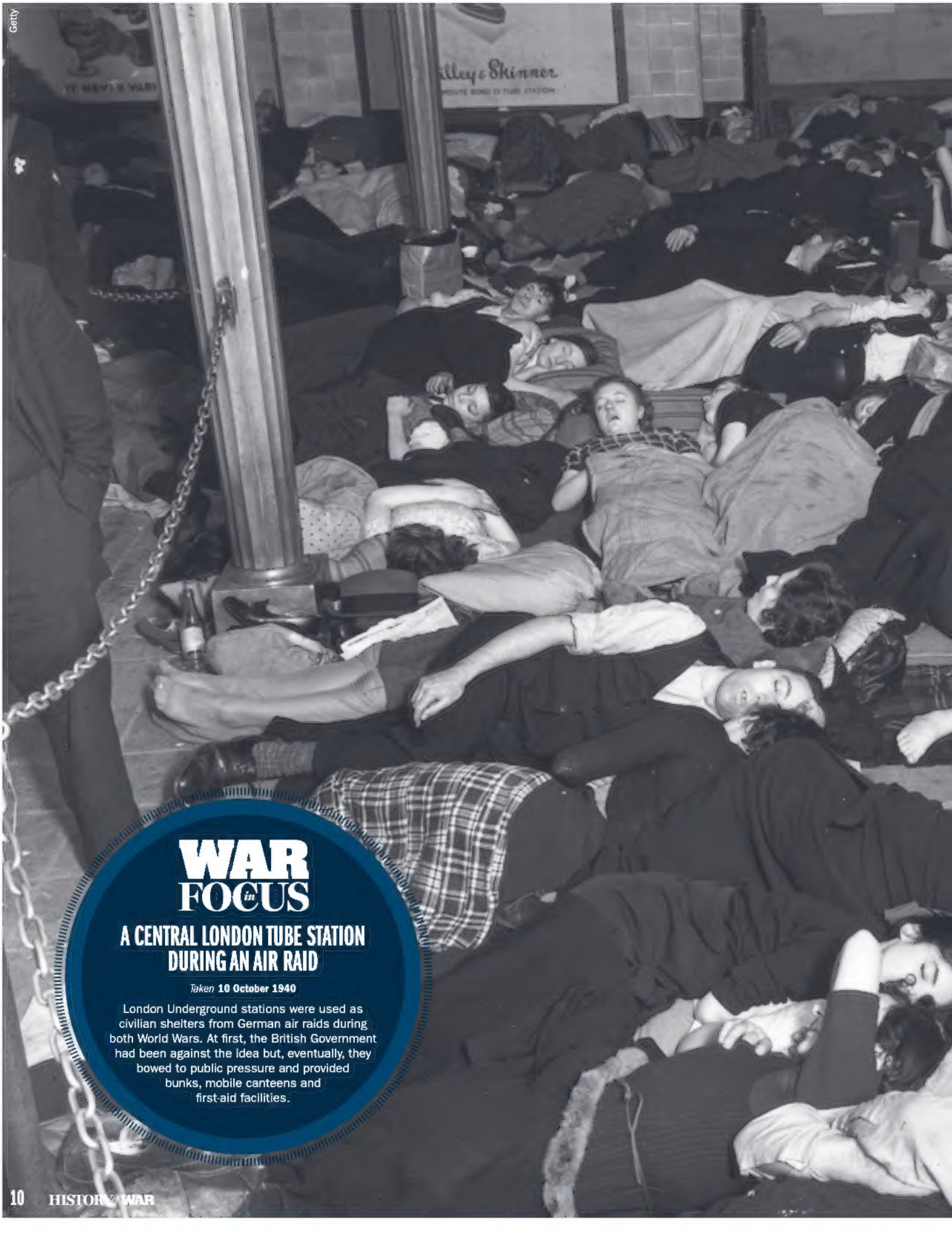
A British soldier crouches in a dugout during the middle stages of the First World War. It's freezing-cold and the water in the flooded pit is penetrating his field boots. Trenchfoot was a huge problem for troops in these circumstances. Occurring in as little as 13 hours of exposure, it caused terrible pain and could result in gangrene.

WAR in FOCUS

BRITISH TROOPS SECURE HELMAND PROVINCE, CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN

Taken **23 March 2006**

A platoon of British soldiers passes a farmer working his plantation in Musa Qala, a town in Helmand Province. British forces were meeting with local district leaders in an attempt to win hearts and minds ahead of the arrival of the British Helmand Task Force, which was due to be fully deployed in June 2006.



WAR in FOCUS

A CENTRAL LONDON TUBE STATION DURING AN AIR RAID

Taken **10 October 1940**

London Underground stations were used as civilian shelters from German air raids during both World Wars. At first, the British Government had been against the idea but, eventually, they bowed to public pressure and provided bunks, mobile canteens and first-aid facilities.

DISPATCHES

Military news and opinion from around the globe, including a new theory on Alexander's death, the uncovering of some rare First World War photographs and a Boer Wars bugle

GREAT WAR DEATH TOLL UNDERESTIMATED BY UP TO A MILLION MEN

New book reveals errors and miscalculations

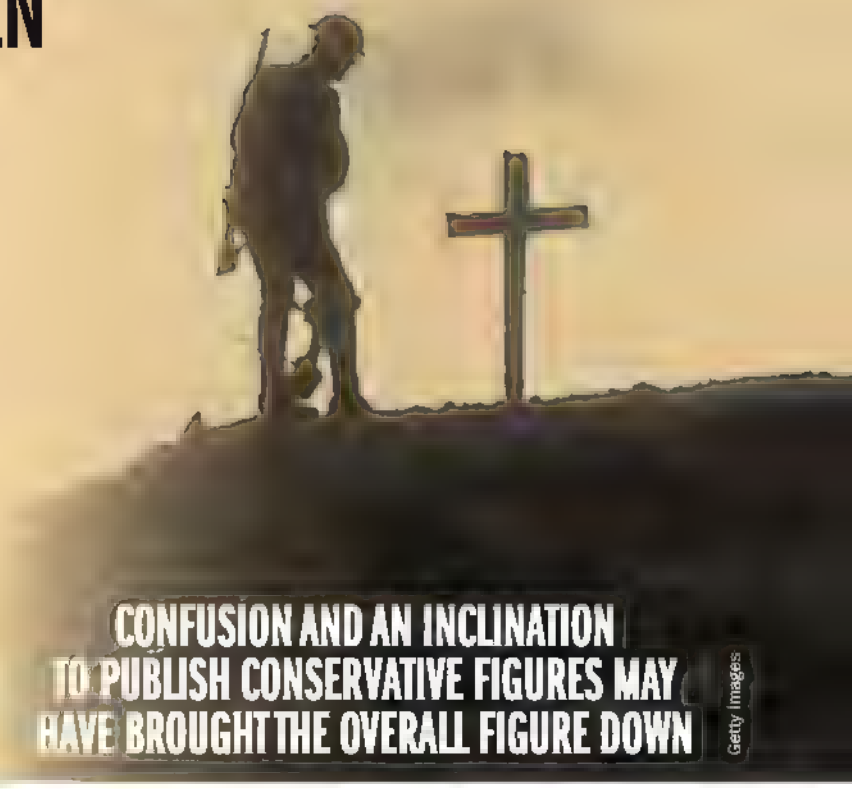
The First World War claimed up to a million more lives than previously calculated, according to a new book.

Antoine Prost, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Paris, is one of the academics who have contributed to *The Cambridge History Of The First World War*, and in his essay he argues that a combination of error, confusion and an inclination to publish conservative figures led to an underestimation of the death toll – by anywhere between 500,000 and a million men.

While studying analyses of casualty lists across participant nations, Professor Prost discovered dozens of errors and miscalculations. "The calculation of losses isn't easy, and most studies present lists of figures without explaining what they cover or how they have been established," he says. "So there is confusion concerning places whose borders had shifted; there is inconsistency in recording the deaths of soldiers from sickness and prisoners of war who died in captivity; and there is uncertainty surrounding the number of soldiers reported missing."

The book also claims that the number of men who suffered from shell-shock may have been underestimated. Says editor Jay Winter of Yale University, "Studies show that stress in the Great War was probably more intense than in later conflicts, and yet physicians were reluctant to diagnose many injuries as psychological. To do so probably would have made it less likely he would receive a pension."

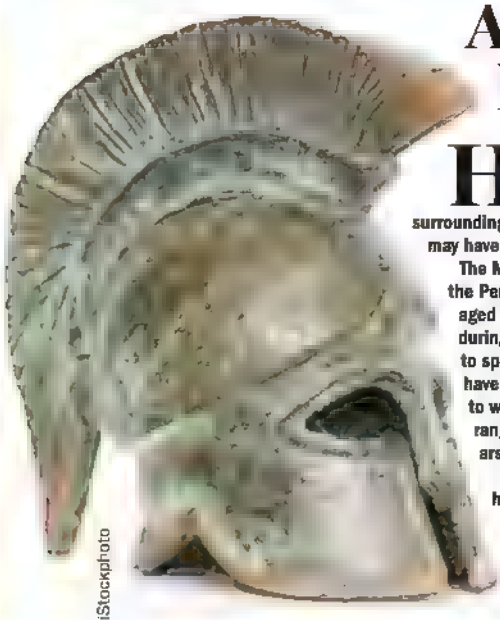
The Cambridge History Of The First World War is reviewed on page 94



CONFUSION AND AN INCLINATION TO PUBLISH CONSERVATIVE FIGURES MAY HAVE BROUGHT THE OVERALL FIGURE DOWN

Getty Images

Alexander the Great may have been killed by poisonous wine



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Historians have speculated about it for 2,000 years but, finally, the mystery surrounding Alexander the Great's death may have been solved...

The Macedonian King – conqueror of the Persian Empire – died in 323BC aged 32, following a 12-day illness during which he had been unable to speak or walk. Since then, there have been numerous theories as to what brought about his demise, ranging from natural causes to arsenic poisoning.

But now, a leading scientist has come up with a new explanation for Alexander's death: wine made from a poisonous plant.

Leo Schep, a toxicologist from New Zealand's National Poisons Centre, believes that poisons such as arsenic could not have been to blame, as death would have come much faster. Instead, he points the finger at *veratrum album* – otherwise known as white

Schep points the finger at veratrum album – a poisonous plant from the lily family

hellebore – a poisonous plant from the lily family that could have been fermented into wine and, once consumed, would have taken much longer to kill. This theory would match an account written by ancient Greek historian Diodorus, who said the King doubled up with pain after drinking wine in honour of his hero, Hercules.

"*Veratrum* poisoning is heralded by the sudden onset of epigastric and substernal pain, which may also be accompanied by nausea and vomiting, followed by bradycardia and hypotension with severe muscular weakness," the research says. "Alexander suffered similar features for the duration of his illness."

While he is pleased with his findings, Dr Schep – who started investigating the mystery in 2003 after he was approached by a team making a BBC documentary – concedes that they will never be conclusive. "I said, 'I'll give it a go, I like a challenge,' thinking I wasn't going to find anything," he remembers. "And to my utter surprise, I found something that could fit the bill. But we'll never really know."

FUNGUS FOUND AT SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MAY HAVE COME FROM FLANDERS

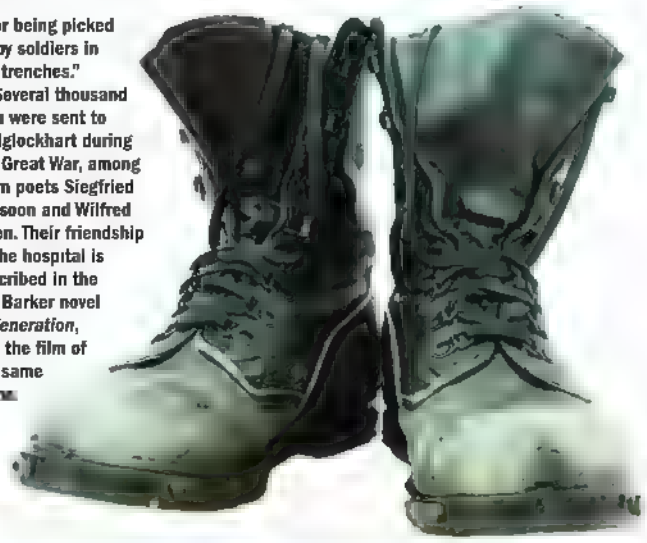
The former hospital was a refuge for shell-shocked troops

A fungus discovered growing on the campus of Edinburgh Napier University may have originated from the battlefields of Flanders.

That's the theory of ecologist Abbie Patterson, who found traces of *clavulinopsis cinereoides* – foreign to Scotland but not to Europe – while carrying out a biodiversity audit. She believes it may developed from spores deposited from the boots of soldiers sent to the site – formerly Craiglockhart Hospital – suffering from shell-shock.

"Group photographs taken during the Great War show soldiers and nurses lined up on the very grassy bank where I discovered the fungus," says Patterson. "It is not hard to make a direct link between these soldiers and the fact that this fungus was growing there. Its spores may have been brought over to this country after being picked up by soldiers in the trenches."

Several thousand men were sent to Craiglockhart during the Great War, among them poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Their friendship at the hospital is described in the Pat Barker novel *Regeneration*, and the film of the same name.



Stockphoto

EARLIEST PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHURCHILL DISCOVERED

RARE DOCUMENTS OF THE WARTIME PRIME MINISTER'S SCHOOLDAYS WERE IN DAIRY BARN

Looking at the pictures of the sulky schoolboy staring out from Save Photo's website, it's hard to believe that he would one day go on to be the Prime Minister of England and lead the country to victory in the Second World War. But it is, indeed, Sir Winston Churchill – in a series of very rare photographs of the leader that have just been released.

The photos were part of a massive, 90,000-strong collection of glass-plate negatives depicting every pupil and staff member who attended Harrow School between 1860 and 1965. Taken by Hills and Saunders, they somehow ended up in the dairy barn of a farm near Cirencester.

Rescued by the owner, they were then taken to Save Photo to be restored and digitised.

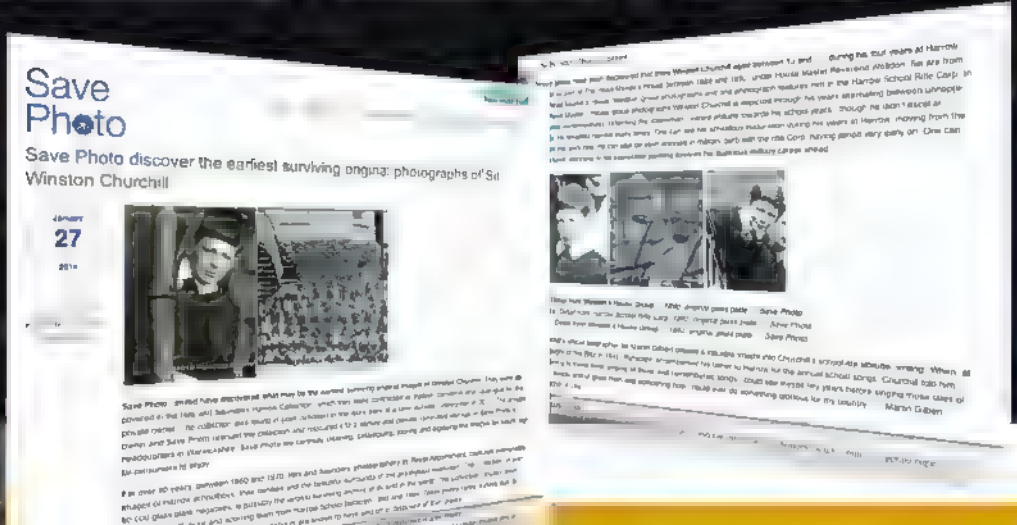
The Churchill photographs were taken between the years

The pictures show the future PM in both school uniform and full military garb

of 1889 and 1892, and show the future Prime Minister in a number of guises, from wearing his school uniform to standing proudly in full military garb during his time with the Rifle Corps.

Peter Boswell, Managing Director of Save Photo, comments, "We have been very privileged to work with such a unique collection of historical significance. Our team have been working on an intensive programme of conservation and archiving. We have been lovingly inspecting each photographic plate to ensure it is carefully cleaned, recorded and stored in a high-quality archival sleeve. With the First World War centenary events beginning this year, I'm delighted that we have been able to add these amazing lost images to the portfolio of known Churchill images."

The plates will go on sale at auction later this year.



Events

▶ UNTIL 11 FEBRUARY

Family History: Tracing Your World War One Ancestors

This course is designed for anybody looking to trace their ancestors from the First World War, with the expert help of Robert Parker and some key historical records. Witchford Village College, Cambridgeshire. *07803 129207; www.great-war.ccan.co.uk*

▶ UNTIL 9 MARCH

War Games

Thought-provoking exhibition exploring the relationship between conflict and children's play. Includes toys, photographs and documents. V&A Museum of Childhood, London. *020 8983 5200; www.museumofchildhood.org.uk*

▶ 8 FEBRUARY

Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare Sponsored Walk

In aid of the True Heroes charity. Starting from Bristol city centre at 8.30am. *07742 051378; www.justgiving.com/Tony-Hall7*

▶ 8 FEBRUARY – 29 MARCH

Everybody's Darling: The First World War Nurse Exhibition

Fascinating display exploring the many different nursing organisations that helped wounded soldiers throughout the course of the First World War, including first-hand accounts from the nurses themselves. Mansfield Museum, Nottinghamshire. *08444 775678. www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum*

▶ 15 FEBRUARY – 21 APRIL

A Great Estate at War – Land, Sea and Air

The stories behind the family members and workers at Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Winston Churchill. The tales are brought to life with scale models and costumed characters. Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire. *01993 810530; www.blenheimpalace.com*

WAR FILMS BLITZ THE BIG SCREEN IN 2014

There are an abundance of war films hitting our cinema screens over the next couple of months, taking in everything from Greek mythology to the present Afghanistan conflict.

The Monuments Men (out 21 February), directed by George Clooney and starring Clooney himself, Matt Damon and Cate Blanchett, tells the amazing true story of how the men and women of the Fine Arts and Archives unit of the Allied forces rescued more than a thousand years of cultural history from theft and destruction by the Nazis.

THE MONUMENTS MEN TELLS THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE WHO RESCUED 1,000 YEARS OF CULTURAL HISTORY FROM THE NAZIS

Stalingrad (21 February) is the first Russian film to have been completely produced with IMAX 3D technology and follows a group of Soviet reconnaissance troops occupying a building that shelters survivors of the Battle of Stalingrad, who find themselves in battle with German troops. Romance ensues between a German officer and a female Soviet survivor...

Released to international acclaim in the US last year, the Oscar-nominated *The Book Thief* (26 February) follows a young girl, who, subjected to the horrors of Second World War Germany, finds solace by stealing books and sharing them with others.

300: Rise Of An Empire (7 March) is the sequel to 2006's *300*, and sees Greek General Themistocles leading the charge against invading Persian forces.

And finally, *The Patrol* (7 February) features the stories of British troops deployed to Helmand Province in Afghanistan, who question their role in the war. The film was nominated for a British Independent Film Award

BOER WARS BUGLE FOUND IN CHARITY SHOP

iStockphoto

A bargain-hunter in Coventry couldn't believe her luck when she came across a bugle in her local charity shop – only to find that it was a relic of the Boer Wars.

Deirdre Haynes spotted the gleaming brass instrument at the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance shop, and decided to buy it as a present for her granddaughter, a budding musician.

"The volunteer in the shop told me an old lady had brought it in wrapped up in paper," explains Deirdre. "She said it had been used by her grandfather, who blew it in Africa during the Boer Wars. That's all she knew, and she said that the lady had been sad to give it away. Now that it's found a home, we want to know more about its history."

The Boer Wars were fought in South Africa between 1880-1881 and 1899-1902, between the British Empire and the Boer Republic, and such bugles would have been used by boys in their early teens to send signals to troops to move around the battlefield.

Traci Horton, assistant manager of the charity shop, says: "When it was handed in, I wasn't sure what to do with it. It's so old, and it's even got the military colours on it.

"We've never had anything like this given in before, and I thought that maybe I would put it on eBay. In the end, I put it out but I sold it for a lot of money. Deirdre came in just after I'd put it on display and bought it straightaway."

PHOTOS FOUND IN ATTIC REVEAL WWI DEVASTATION IN FRANCE

Territorial Army sapper had taken them while being stationed in the country

When Peter Berry Ottaway of Hereford began the process of clearing out his late grandfather's attic, little did he know of the surprise that awaited him.

There, in a rusty box, was a treasure trove of old photographs depicting the devastation exacted on northern France during the First World War. His grandfather, Hubert, had taken the pictures on his box Brownie camera while serving as a sapper with the Territorial Army, and while many of them had perished with the passing of time, Peter was able to save between 40 and 50, along with his grandfather's diary, written during the period.

iStockphoto

The photos paint a poignant picture of life on the Western Front, revealing the desolation of French towns and villages razed to the ground in the path of both sides in the conflict. The remains of houses and churches, blitzed by Allied and German shells during the Battle of Arras in 1917, can be seen along with long lines of French refugees who had been left homeless.

Tragically, Hubert never got to see the photographs himself because he was left almost blinded by a shell attack soon after they were taken. But Peter is grateful for his grandfather's work and now plans to share the pictures with the public.

"The images provide a fascinating record and I'm incredibly excited by them," he says. "I didn't think we would be able to recover them due to their age, but now we have we will be putting them in a book."

REVELL ANNOUNCES NEW MILITARY MODELS
A US tank that fought in the Korean War and an aerial stalwart from Japan's Second World War campaign are among the new model releases by Revell this month.
The M47 General Patton II was rushed into production to participate in Korea but didn't make it in time and never actually saw any combat, though it was deployed during the Cold War and by the Pakistani Army during the Indo-Pak War of 1965. Revell's 1/32-scale kit (pictured above) comes in 174 parts and features a combat crew of five. In a smaller scale (1/48) is the company's Japanese A6M5 Zero, a plane renowned for its speed and manoeuvrability but whose lack of armour left it vulnerable to combat during the 1939-1945 conflict, and ultimately signalled its demise. This model comes in 29 parts. Visit www.revell.com

Newly published diaries "humanise" the Great War

To mark the centenary of the start of the First World War, around 300,000 pages of soldiers' diary extracts have been published by The National Archives.

Twenty-five volunteers spent the whole of last year painstakingly digitising hundreds of boxes of diaries, which detail the experiences of British troops deployed in France and Belgium between 1914 and 1918. The poignant personal accounts reveal the anxiety and terror felt by the men on the frontline as they spent months dug into their trenches, battling a war that never seemed to end. However, they also capture the spirit and camaraderie attained through impromptu sporting events, including tug-of-war and rugby matches, along with the famed British sense of humour.

William Spencer, author and military-records specialist at The National Archives, is thrilled that the diaries have become available. He says, "They allow people across the world to discover the daily activities, stories and battles of each unit. War is a de-humanising thing but the diaries somehow humanise it."

Visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

iStockphoto

Events

▶ 23 FEBRUARY

Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War

The first major exhibition of its kind: of contemporary art produced since the first Gulf War. Hear from the artists themselves and discover what motivates them to create art about conflict. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. *0161 836 4000; www.iwm.org.uk*

▶ 23 FEBRUARY

Militaria Fair

Indoor fair with 70 tables of militaria from some of the country's leading dealers. Breckland/Thetford Leisure Centre, Norfolk. *07596 436260*

▶ 25 FEBRUARY

Churchill's First War

Author and foreign correspondent Con Coughlin tells the story of Winston Churchill's first war against the Afghans in the 1890s. This campaign led to the future Prime Minister's first book, which is still read by British and US military Commanders today, and Coughlin will also discuss the parallels it holds with modern conflict in Afghanistan. Churchill War Rooms, London. *020 7930 6961; www.iwm.org.uk*

▶ 27 FEBRUARY

The Great War In Portraits

This new exhibition of First World War art will include 80 paintings, photographs, sculptures and films showing the human experience of war, as well as portraits of iconic figures such as Winston Churchill. National Portrait Gallery, London. *020 7306 0055. www.npg.org.uk*

▶ 1 MARCH

On Track Military Model Show

The Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone. *www.on.track@live.co.uk*

AND DON'T FORGET THESE EVENTS LATER IN THE YEAR...

▶ 16-20 JULY

The War And Peace Revival

RAF Westenhanger, Folkestone Racecourse, Kent. *01304 813337; www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk*

▶ 1-3 AUGUST

Military & Flying Machines Show

Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Upminster, Essex. *www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk*

▶ 23-25 AUGUST

Military Odyssey

The Kent Show Ground, Detling, Kent. *www.military-odyssey.com*

▶ 20-21 SEPTEMBER

Euro Militaire

Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, Kent. *0844 848 8822; www.euromilitaire.co.uk*

LONDRES
PARIS
MADRID
Marseille
Corse
Alger
Maroc
Tunis

GERMANY STRIKES WEST

FIRST WORLD WAR: THE ASSASSINATION OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN HEIR-APPARENT FRANZ FERDINAND IGNITED WHAT WE NOW KNOW AS THE GREAT WAR. NO SOONER HAD GERMANY ANNOUNCED THEIR INVOLVEMENT THAN THEY WERE BEING THREATENED ON BOTH SIDES. SO – AS HISTORIAN ANDREW WIEST EXPLAINS – THEY SET IN MOTION A PLAN TO CONQUER ALL SIDES, STARTING WITH THE WESTERN FRONT...

When chauffeur Leopold Lojka took a wrong turn while driving in Sarajevo one summer's morning in 1914, little did he know that he was also about to change the course of history and affect the lives of millions of young men. His passengers were Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir-apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie, who were visiting the Bosnian capital on business. Hours before, a young soldier with connections to Serbian militant group the Black Hand – who were seeking independence for Slavic people from Austro-Hungarian rule – had attempted to assassinate the couple by throwing a bomb at their limousine, but had failed to hit his targets. Now, as the car trundled off the beaten track, it caught the attention of a second assassin from the group, Gavrilo Princip, who was relaxing at a café. Seizing his chance, he fired seven rounds. Unlike his comrade, he didn't miss.

For Austria-Hungary, already irked by Serbian interference in Bosnia, the assassination was the final straw. Its government drew up a list of ten intentionally unacceptable demands for the Serbs, known as the July Ultimatum, then waited for the inevitably reluctant response. Sure enough, Belgrade agreed to only eight of the demands, giving Austria-Hungary an excuse to declare war, which it did on 28 July 1914.

VON SCHLIEFFEN SUGGESTED THAT GERMANY SHOULD QUICKLY DEFEAT THE FRENCH BEFORE THE RUSSIANS HAD A CHANCE TO MOBILISE

The crisis quickly escalated into what we now know as the Great War, with Russia stating its allegiance to its protégé Serbia, and Austria-Hungary's neighbour Germany – ruled by Emperor Wilhelm II, or "Kaiser Bill" – reacting by declaring war on Russia. France and Britain then condemned the Kaiser's aggressive stance (especially when he moved his troops into neutral Belgium). All of which left the Germans facing a threat on both sides: Russia to the east, and Britain and France to the west – although the Kaiser wasn't too fazed by Britain, calling the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) "a contemptible little army". (The BEF, with customary aplomb, turned the pejorative term into a compliment and referred to themselves ever after as the "Old Contemptibles".)

A solution to the problem was drawn up by German Field Marshal Count Alfred von Schlieffen. Rather than attack the Eastern and Western Fronts simultaneously, he suggested that Germany should quickly defeat the French (whom it had overcome in a matter of weeks in 1870) before the much larger Russian Army had a chance to mobilise, then launch an attack on their unprepared eastern foe. And so, westward the German military machine rolled..

Swift and decisive

When the Germans invaded France, most military thinkers in every country expected the war to be swift and decisive. The Industrial Revolution had provided the combatants with new weaponry that would make it so. In reality, the new weaponry and the great industrial might of the belligerent nations would make offensives costly and futile, but military planners would cling to their offensive beliefs like grim death.

The French Army, numbering some two million men under the command of General Joseph Joffre, was wedded to the idea of an audacious attack aimed at achieving a Napoleonic-style decisive victory. Its offensive scheme, dubbed Plan 17, called for a mass invasion of the German-held states of Alsace-Lorraine. Joffre and his Generals believed that French fighting spirit, or *élan*, would make up for what Plan 17 lacked in subtlety. But the plan had several weaknesses, including the fact that it left much of northern France thinly defended. Such details mattered little to the French, who planned to sweep forward so fast that any German riposte would come too late to stave off their defeat.

The BEF numbered but 150,000 men under the command of Sir John French, and it entered the French plans almost as an afterthought. The French expected their victory to be so swift that the BEF would barely have time to reach French soil before the war was over. As a result, Joffre relegated it to the northernmost portion of the line, furthest from Alsace-Lorraine and seemingly furthest from trouble.

In formulating his plan, von Schlieffen realised that the French would probably attempt to seize their lost states of Alsace-Lorraine, and

The timid General

General Helmuth von Moltke succeeded Alfred von Schlieffen as Chief of the German General Staff in 1906. Von Moltke saw fit to make several alterations to the Schlieffen Plan. Afraid of losing too much territory, he weakened the right flank of the German advance and strengthened the defensive formations in Alsace-Lorraine. As the war began, the General remained far behind the front lines and lost touch with his advancing forces. As a result, he overestimated the success of the German advance. Adding to his difficulties was a Russian invasion on the Eastern Front and a British landing at Antwerp. The Schlieffen Plan called for German forces to ignore such distractions and to focus on the speedy defeat of France, but von Moltke's confidence wavered. He removed troops from the right flank of the German advance to deal with the perceived threats. The Schlieffen Plan was shattered.

Furthermore, von Moltke's mistakes helped lead to the critical Battle of the Marne. At this pivotal point, he yet again lost contact with his forces and sent Richard Hentsch, a mere Colonel, to the front to deal with the situation. His control lost and his nerve broken, von Moltke abandoned the offensive. Constant tinkering and timidity had led the Germans to a strategic defeat that would ultimately help transform the war into a stalemate. On 14 September 1914, von Moltke was relieved of his command.

General Helmuth von Moltke (right)

"The best-equipped British army that ever went forth to war..."

Following the Boer War, Richard Burdon Haldane – British Secretary of State for War – created the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to the event of a war on foreign soil. That event occurred in August 1914, with the start of the First World War. By that time, the BEF comprised a general HQ, three Army corps – each of two infantry divisions – a large cavalry division of four brigades and a fifth independent cavalry brigade. This totalled around 100,000 men, mainly made up of volunteers. However, as a precaution, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith decided that, initially, only two of the Army corps and the cavalry should be sent to France and Belgium (although the third Army corps followed shortly afterwards).

In terms of numbers, the BEF paled in comparison to the French and German armies, but its unswerving spirit is legendary, with official British Army historian James Edmonds later describing it as "incomparably, the best-trained, best-organised and best-equipped British army that ever went forth to war" (a stark contrast to Kaiser Bill's description of it as a "contemptible little army").

Another British Expeditionary Force was deployed at the start of the Second World War, under the command of General Lord Gort. However, it was forced to evacuate from France in June 1940 as part of Operation Ariel.

Soldiers from the BEF repair bicycles while under artillery fire near the Aisne section of the front, 1914

he aimed to use such a predictable plan of action to his advantage. The "Schlieffen Plan" called for a relatively small force to hold the territory. The weakness of the defenders was designed to draw the attacking French further into a trap. While the French advanced into Alsace-Lorraine, five German armies would advance through Belgium into lightly defended northern France, before wheeling on the pivot of Alsace-Lorraine – rather like a great revolving door. The armies would capture Paris and then advance upon the attacking French from behind. While the French pushed on one part of the door in Alsace-Lorraine, the other part of the door would hit them in the back. It was to be a classic battle of envelopment, rather like Hannibal at Cannae. It would result in the destruction of the entire French Army in a *kesselschlacht* (cauldron battle).

Von Schlieffen realised that his plan had some weaknesses. The army on the German right flank would have to travel a tremendous distance to effect the capture of Paris and the envelopment of the French armies in the south. Success of his scheme was so important to Schlieffen that, on his deathbed, his final words were "do not weaken the right flank". He had also realised that to make such a massive military operation possible would require miracles of logistics.

To that end, he meticulously worked out the supply of the advancing German forces. Even so, his plan was so delicately balanced that any alteration of the allocation of men or supplies would threaten to ruin the entire scheme.

Disastrous blunders

General Helmuth von Moltke, in command of the German armed forces, numbering over three million men, put the Schlieffen Plan into operation in 1914. Even before the outbreak of war, he had altered its very nature. His revised version placed more emphasis on the defence of Alsace-Lorraine, which weakened the vital right flank. Once the battle had begun, it became apparent that von Moltke was timid and made blunders that would doom the plan to failure.

The German First Army under General Alexander von Kluck occupied von Schlieffen's ▶

The war in western Europe was characterised by rapid movement, as evidenced by this hurried German advance across a river

TIMELINE 1914

28 JUNE 1914

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, is assassinated in Sarajevo. This sets off a diplomatic crisis, with Austria-Hungary delivering an ultimatum to Serbia, with whom the assassins are connected.

28 JULY

Austro-Hungarians fire the first shots in preparation for an invasion of Serbia.

4 AUGUST

Britain declares war on Germany, and Germany on Belgium.

13 AUGUST

German forces break through all of Belgium's defensive obstacles and into the open land beyond.

14 AUGUST

The French First and Second Armies launch Plan 17, implemented as an offensive into Alsace-Lorraine.

23 AUGUST

The 170,000-strong German First Army slams headlong into the 70,000-man BEF. The BEF retreats the following day.

26 AUGUST

Elements of Alexander von Kluck's forces strike II Corps at Le Cateau, creating a desperate situation for the British, who retreat immediately.

31 AUGUST

Von Kluck and Karl von Bülow decide that German forces should wheel inside Paris rather than envelop and capture it, thus straying from the conditions of the Schlieffen Plan.

6 SEPTEMBER

British forces counter-attack, leading to the First Battle of the Marne.

7-8 SEPTEMBER

Joseph Gallieni sends 6,000 soldiers to help the Allies hold the line.

9 SEPTEMBER

Richard Hentsch orders the German armies to retreat, ending the Battle of the Marne.

4 NOVEMBER

French forces attack German positions on the Chemin des Dames Ridge.

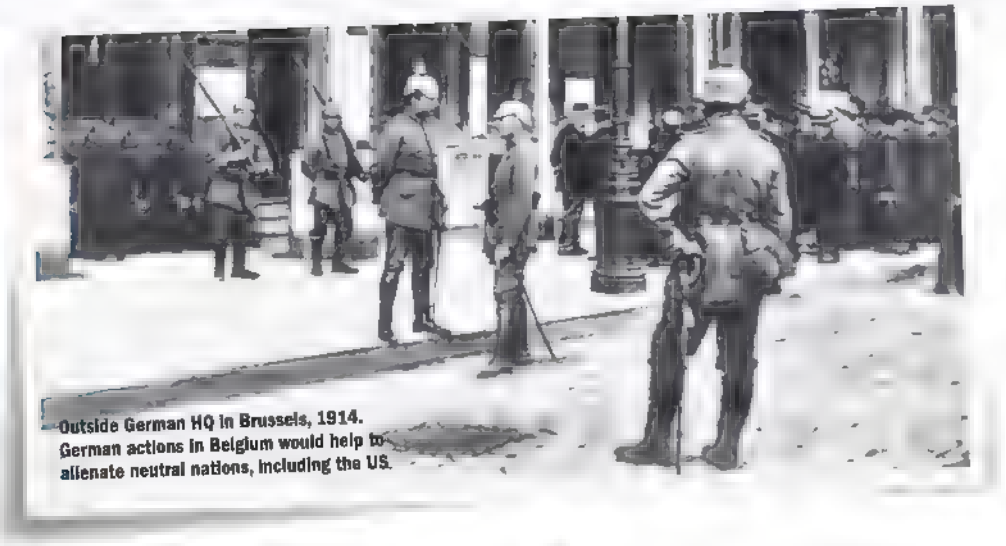
11 NOVEMBER

The First Battle of Ypres. The BEF repulses German attacks, and fighting continues for the next two years.

King Albert

After Germany invaded the tiny nation of Belgium, King Albert assumed command of his nation's small but spirited army. He and his Commanders hoped to make a gallant stand at the fortress city of Liege, but the speed of the German advance and the sheer weight of its firepower forced the Belgians to retreat to, and take refuge within, the fortifications of the port of Antwerp within days. During the "Race to the Sea", when the two opposing forces continually attempted to outflank each other through north-eastern France, German forces once again pummelled the outmatched Belgians, forcing them to relinquish Antwerp and retreat further down the coast. Finally, after almost all of Belgium had fallen, in late October 1914 Albert's forces held firm at the Battle of the Yser, stemming the German advance partly by flooding the low-lying countryside and making it impassible to German troops. Belgian forces, led by their King, tenaciously held on to a tiny corner of their nation for the remainder of the war.

Although Albert remained tied to the British and the French, relations between the erstwhile Allies were often strained. The King distanced himself from most Allied war aims, maintaining that he and his forces were fighting only for the freedom and independence of Belgium. Indeed, King Albert was often quite keen to pursue the notion of a compromise peace with the Germans, and his forces did not participate in many of the great Allied offensives in the west. By 1918, though, his position had modified and Albert personally led his army forward in the final Allied offensives that won the war. Albert died in a mountaineering accident in 1934.



Outside German HQ in Brussels, 1914. German actions in Belgium would help to alienate neutral nations, including the US.

beloved right flank position in 1914. To the south, Karl von Bülow, nominally von Kluck's superior, commanded the German Second Army. These two forces would have to achieve a seamless co-ordination of attack to bring the Schlieffen Plan to a successful conclusion.

The advancing Germans first had to overcome the Belgian fortress city of Liege. Military planners in Belgium and France saw Liege and other Belgian fortresses as a trump card. It was calculated that, as one of the strongest fortifications in the world, Liege would halt any German advance for a great length of time. However, the Germans brought up massive 420mm siege howitzers to pound the fortress, crushing the morale of the defenders. Mighty Liege held out for only one day. By 13 August, the German forces had broken through all of Belgium's defences and into the open land beyond. The defeated Belgians retreated north to Antwerp, while the Germans swept into France.

Dire peril

The French had expected a German attack in the north, and had located powerful defensive forces in Metz to counter any such action. In reality, the focus of the German advance lay further to the north, shattering the French defensive scheme. Only the French Fifth Army, under General Charles Lanrezac, stood in the way of the main German advance. As early as 14 August, Lanrezac informed Joffre that he believed the main German advance would be on his front. Joffre, though, remained fixated on Plan 17.

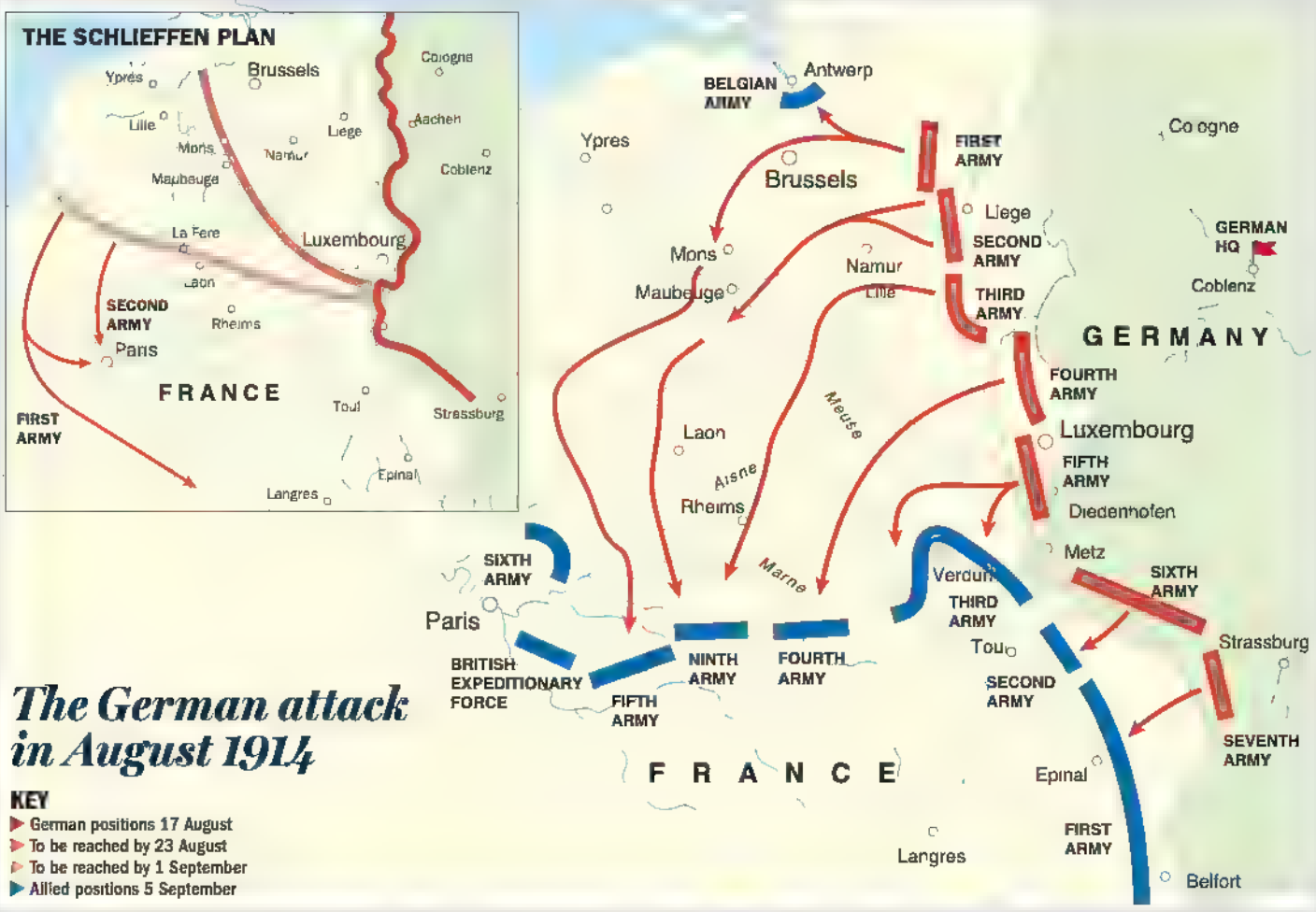
While the Germans advanced through Belgium, the BEF disembarked in France. Though the Allies had discussed many possible options for the BEF, in the end it had been decided to add the force to the extreme northern section of the French line, near the Belgian city of Mons. Here, the British would be placated – and clear of any major action – as the French Army rolled to victory in the south. As the BEF began to reach its assigned position, expecting to occupy something of a quiet part of the line, von Kluck and von Bülow made a fateful decision. In an effort to narrow a gap that had developed between their forces, von Bülow instructed von Kluck to veer south. This meant that the powerful German First Army would advance through Mons and was on a collision course with the BEF. To make matters worse for the British, the French forces to their south, under Lanrezac, had retreated in the face of the German advance, leaving the BEF alone and in danger of being surrounded and annihilated.

On 23 August, the 170,000-strong German First Army slammed headlong into the 70,000-man BEF. In an epic battle, the tiny British force defeated attack after attack, holding the Germans at bay. Some British soldiers contended that only divine intervention kept destruction at arm's length. However, it was the discipline and marksmanship of the individual British soldier that won the day. Though small in numbers, the BEF ranked among the world's elite forces in terms of training. The Germans had not expected a battle of this type at Mons, and for that reason their attacks on 23 August were poorly co-ordinated. Even so, the BEF found itself in dire peril. One British soldier later recalled his first taste of the terror of combat:

I had been straining my eyes, so, for a moment, I could not believe them. A great, grey mass of humanity was charging, running for all God would let them, straight onto us not 50 yards off. As I fired my rifle, the rest all went off almost simultaneously. One saw the great mass of Germans quiver. Some fell, some fell over them, and others came on. Then the whole lot came on again. Twenty yards more and they would have been over us in their thousands, but our rifle fire must have been fearful. Just for one short minute or two, we poured the ammunition into them in boxfuls. My rifles were red-hot at the finish.

The BEF had fought bravely, but General John French knew that he could not persevere against such odds with two exposed flanks; such a course would doom the entire British force. As

German soldiers advance through a field towards a clash with the BEF at Mons.



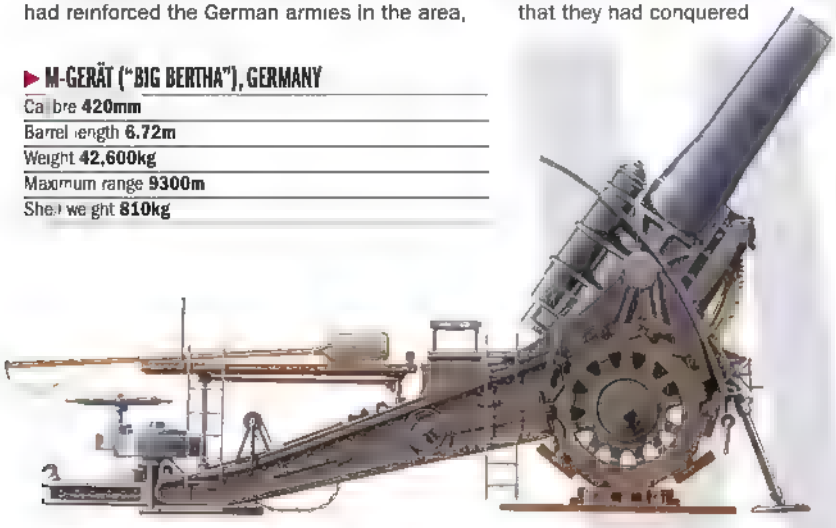
a result, on 24 August, even as von Kluck moved to surround Mons, the BEF began to retreat. Thus in the north, the "Battle of the Frontiers" came to an end as a resounding German victory. Both the French and British forces in the area were in full retreat, and the Schlieffen Plan ground remorselessly on, ahead of schedule.

On the southern part of the battle front, Joffre put into action the French offensive, designed to seize the lost states of Alsace-Lorraine. On 14 August, even as the Germans moved into contact with Lanrezac in the north, the French First and Second Armies launched the main portion of Plan 17. The French found the going difficult, partly because von Moltke had reinforced the German armies in the area, but also because the German heavy artillery outranged the standard French 75mm artillery piece, and thus rained death down on French units with relative impunity. Making matters worse, German Commanders – and in particular Prince Rupprecht – placed pressure on von Moltke to allow them to attack. Here, von Moltke's resolve crumbled in the face of such a royal request, and he gave a German attack in Alsace-Lorraine his blessing. This fundamentally altered the Schlieffen Plan; French forces would not be enticed forward to their doom. Instead, on 20 August, the German forces in Alsace-Lorraine rushed forward, and by 22 August the French had been forced to relinquish all land that they had conquered in Plan 17.

THE GERMAN HEAVY ARTILLERY OUTRANGED THE STANDARD FRENCH 75MM ARTILLERY PIECE, AND THUS RAINED DEATH DOWN ON FRENCH UNITS WITH RELATIVE IMPUNITY

M-GERÄT ("BIG BERTHA"), GERMANY

Calibre	**420mm**
Barrel length	**6.72m**
Weight	**42,600kg**
Maximum range	**9300m**
Shell weight	**810kg**



The result of Prince Rupprecht's attack was a tactical victory but a strategic defeat. French forces were back at their start line and were able to react with sufficient speed once the nature of events in the north had been realised. If massive numbers of French troops were engaged deep within Alsace-Lorraine, far from adequate transport facilities, the outcome of the Schlieffen Plan might have been different.

On 23 August, Joffre finally came to the realisation that Plan 17 was in a shambles and that the German advance to the north posed a threat to the very existence of France. Although Joffre can be blamed for continuing the attack after all hope of victory had faded, and of ignoring danger in the north, he now emerged as the saviour of France. Generals up and down the line despaired of any chance to stand up to the German attack. Joffre, however, stood firm in his belief in ultimate victory. It was his calmness in the face of disaster that eventually won the day for the Allies.

Methodically, Joffre began the Herculean task of redeploying French forces northwards to meet the German offensive and defend Paris. He also worked very hard to halt the retreats of the French and British forces already in the area.

ELEMENTS OF VON KLUCK'S FORCES STRUCK II CORPS AT LE CATEAU, AND THE SITUATION FOR THE BRITISH SOON BECAME DESPERATE

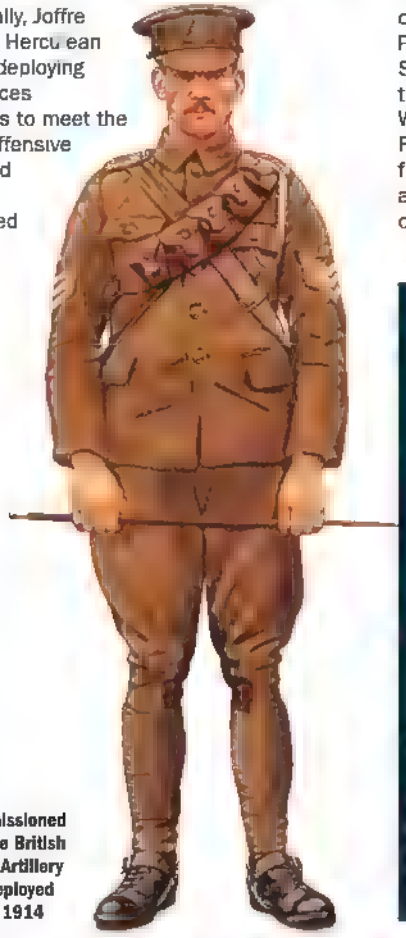
Von Moltke, however, grew ever more scared. He made several mistakes that would help ruin German chances for a quick victory in the west. In an effort to bolster their Belgian allies, the British had landed a small contingent of troops in Antwerp. Though the force posed little threat, von Moltke chose to remove troops from the right flank of the advance to invest the Belgian fortress. Even worse, he overreacted to events on the Eastern Front. A Russian invasion of East Prussia caused him great alarm, though the Schlieffen Plan warned to ignore the actions of the Russian Army until it had fully mobilised. Wary of the effects of losing German soil to the Russians, von Moltke removed two army corps from the right flank of the advance in the west to aid forces in the east. Thus, while the numbers of Allied troops in the the Western Front were on the increase, German forces were decreasing. Moltke had destroyed the Schlieffen Plan, and initiative was shifting to the French side. Ironically, the two corps that von Moltke removed for use against the Russians were in transit across Germany when the battles in the east were won and the battles in the west were lost.

In the north, the German advance proceeded and nearly brought about the destruction of the BEF. During the retreat, Joffre was obliged to divide his forces to avoid passing through a large forest. As a result, the British II Corps, under General Horace Smith-Dorrien, veered north toward Le Cateau – and once again into the path of the German Army. Elements of von Kluck's forces struck II Corps at Le Cateau on 26 August, and the situation for the British soon became desperate. Only a gallant defence and a hasty retreat under the cover of a determined rearguard saved II Corps from obliteration. It seemed that it would only be a matter of time before the BEF was destroyed and the relentless German advance reached Paris.

Vulnerable flank

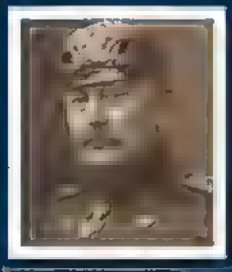
As the Germans moved through Le Cateau, Joffre redeployed his forces north to meet the coming threat. This enabled the French to create two new armies in the north – the Sixth and Ninth, under the command of General Michel-Joseph Maunoury and General Ferdinand Foch respectively. In addition, the French were busy raising a force in Paris under the command of Joseph Gallieni. Joffre's quick thinking and determination, coupled with von Moltke's mismanagement, had begun to alter the balance of power in northern France. As September approached, the Allies had a total of 41 divisions in the north, as opposed to only 25 German ones. The initiative had now passed to the Allies, who were afforded an opportunity to blunt the mighty German advance, now nearing the gates of Paris and possible victory.

On 31 August, the Germans made a fateful decision that would alter the course of the First World War. In an effort to pursue the supposedly beaten Allies more closely, and to shorten the ground to be covered by their tired armies, von Kluck and von Bülow decided that German

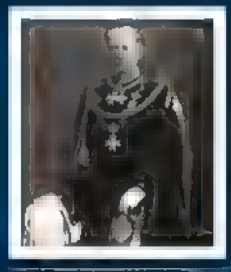


A non-commissioned Officer of the British Royal Horse Artillery (RHA), as deployed in France in 1914

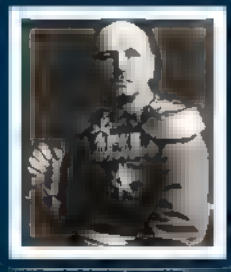
Key figures



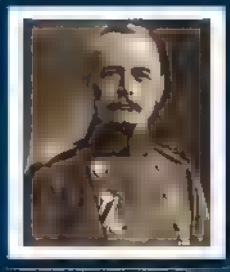
HELMUTH VON MOLTKE
As Chief of German General Staff, von Moltke revised the Schlieffen Plan to most modern conditions, but this contributed to the halt of the German offensive on the Marne in September 1914, which led to him being replaced by Kaiser Wilhelm.



ALFRED VON SCHLIEFFEN
One of the most respected strategists of his era, it was von Schlieffen who – prior to the war – conceived the plan of action that would enable Germany to engage with forces in both the East and the West. He died a year before the First World War commenced.



ALEXANDER VON KLUCK
Von Kluck was in command of the German First Army, which was part of the Schlieffen Plan's strong right-wing offensive that would encircle Paris and bring a rapid conclusion to the war. He was said to be an aggressive and impatient Commander.



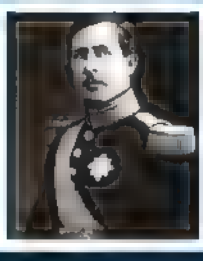
ERICH VON FALKENHAYN
The Prussian Minister of War was considered to be cautious and unwilling to take risks. However, after the disastrous Battle of the Marne, he devised the desperate plan of the Battle of Verdun in 1916 – one of the war's bloodiest battles.

British Royal Horse Artillery advance into the gap between the armies of von Kluck and von Bülow at the Battle of the Marne

forces would wheel inside Paris rather than envelop and capture it. But by doing that, the Germans would offer the Allies their flank and Joffre would be given a chance to counter-attack with his burgeoning forces. The French plan of action was simple and devastating. Maunoury and his newly formed army would strike von Kluck's flank. Joffre hoped that von Kluck, seeing his vulnerable flank threatened, would turn his army to face Maunoury's assault. Such an action would create a large gap between von Kluck's and von Bülow's armies. Into this gap, the BEF would advance, threatening von Kluck with envelopment and destruction.

Though the British were initially reluctant to agree to such a risky offensive, the Allied counter-attack occurred on 6 September, beginning the First Battle of the Marne. As expected, von Kluck reacted to Maunoury's attack by shifting troops from his left flank to meet the threat, creating a gap in the German lines. The BEF, tentatively at first, advanced into the void between von Kluck's and von Bülow's forces, threatening the entire German position. However, a problem soon developed in the Allied assault. Von Kluck's forces fought with such ferocity that they threatened to throw the attacking French back into Paris; this would leave the BEF stranded between two superior German forces and facing annihilation. On 7 and 8 September, the outcome of the First Battle of the Marne hung in the balance. Now, Gallieni intervened. Realising the decisive moment was at hand, he sent 6,000 reinforcements to the hard-pressed Maunoury. The fresh troops sped to the front in 600 taxicabs and buses – the fabled "Taxis of the Marne". Arriving in the nick of time, the reinforcements enabled Maunoury to hold the line and, once again, threaten the Germans with disaster. ▶

British soldiers shelter against the cold in late 1914

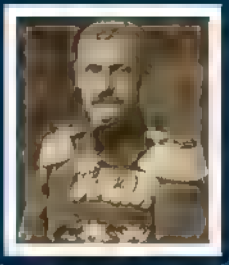


KING ALBERT I
The King of Belgium assumed command of the nation's small army, initially cast aside by German forces, in October 1914 Albert's troops held firm by slamming the German advance, partly through flooding the low-lying countryside.

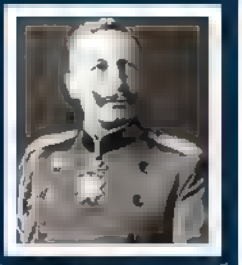
JOSEPH JOFFRE
As French General during the First World War, Joffre is best-known for regrouping the retreating Allied armies to defeat the Germans at the first Battle of the Marne in 1914. He maintained calm throughout the conflict and refused to admit defeat.

SIR JOHN FRENCH
The first Earl of Ypres commanded the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from August 1914 to December 1915. His forces were deployed to the continent and settled in Belgium, where they had the support of the Belgian army and its fortresses.

KARL VON BÜLOW
Assigned to the German Second Army, Field Marshal von Bülow's army was part of the German force that invaded Belgium. Following his poor decision-making in the capture of France, the German public believed him to be responsible for their country's failure.



PRINCE RUPPRECHT
The Crown Prince of Bavaria commanded the German Sixth Army at the outbreak of war in Lorraine, but failed to break through the French lines. He was one of the first Generals to realise that the war could not be won, and left his post in November 1915.



KAISER WILHELM II
As a friend of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Emperor Wilhelm was shocked at his assassination. He encouraged the Austrians to adopt an uncompromising line against Serbia, giving them full German support in the case of war.

Christmas truce

As Christmas approached on the British sector of the Western Front, the weather turned clear and cold. Huddled in their trenches, the combatants – British and German alike – readied themselves for their first Christmas in the trenches. Late at night on 24 December 1914, lit Christmas trees began to appear in the German trenches. Men on both sides began to sing Christmas carols, and were stunned to find their enemies – dug in only a short distance away – joining in to sing the familiar songs.

When morning came, nobody fired, lending the dawn an eerie calm. Men from both sides began to emerge from their trenches – under flags of truce – and made their way across no-man's land to meet the enemy. All across the line, fraternisation broke out among men who had recently been trying desperately to kill one another. Germans and British soldiers shook hands, exchanged gifts, sang more songs, played football, took photographs and buried the dead. One British soldier remembers his experience:

"A German NCO with the Iron Cross started his fellows off on some marching time. When they had done, I set the note for *The Boys Of Bonnie Scotland, Where The Heather And The Bluebells Grew*, and on we went on, singing everything from *Good King Wenceslas* down to the ordinary Tommies' songs, and ending up with *Auld Lang Syne*, which we all – English, Scots, Irish, Prussian, Württembergers – joined in. It was absolutely astounding and if I had seen it on a cinematograph film, I should have sworn that it was faked!"

In some areas of the front, the Christmas truce never took hold, but in many areas it lasted for up to three days. It ended only when astounded Officers heard what was happening and ordered their men to recommence hostilities. Often, the firing began again only after warnings and apologies had been issued to the enemy. In the end, the Christmas truce did not hold and would not be repeated as the ferocity of the war grew apace. But for one brief, beautiful moment, the common men in the trenches had bridged a growing gap of hatred to recognise each other's humanity.

German soldiers decorate a Christmas tree, 1914

General Joffre assesses his French troops. His confidence and calmness were instrumental in the Allies' victory at the Battle of the Marne

The situation for the Germans was becoming desperate. Von Moltke, out of touch and losing his nerve in his HQ in Luxembourg, had no true idea of the developing situation or how to control it. As a result, the Commander sent Richard Hentsch, a mere Colonel, to take control of the situation on the front. Hentsch, struggling to fulfil his task, met with both von Bülow and von Kluck, and found that only von Kluck retained any confidence in victory at the Marne. On 9 September, after the discussions closed, Hentsch made the most important decision of his life and ordered the German armies to retreat. The Battle of the Marne was over.

The Schlieffen Plan had failed, partly due to von Moltke's ineptitude and partly thanks to Joffre's steady hand. Though many historians contend that it was doomed to failure from its inception, von Moltke had contributed to its final ruination by steadily weakening the right flank. He would pay by losing his position as Commander-in-Chief.

Germany was now doomed to fight a two-front war of attrition. The Battle of the Marne was not decisive in the most conventional sense, for the Germans were not defeated or even driven from French soil. In some ways, though, it was one of the most decisive battles in history. It forced Germany to fight a war that they could not win; a war that would soon settle down into a siege that ran the entire length of France.

Savage battles

Kaiser Wilhelm replaced von Moltke with General Erich von Falkenhayn. The new Commander noticed, as did Joffre, that there remained to the north of the combatant forces an open flank – and the possibility of victory. Even as German forces near Paris fell back to the Aisne River, von Falkenhayn began quickly to remove troops from Alsace-Lorraine in an effort to outflank the Allies in the north. Joffre, for his part, sought to press his advantage and launched an attack on the rudimentary German positions on the Aisne. On 14 November, French forces attacked the German positions on the Chemin des Dames Ridge. Though the Germans had had little time to prepare their defences, they were able to call down withering fire upon the French and rebuffed the assault. The Battle of the Aisne was the first example of trench warfare on the Western Front and served as a portent of the future.

After this French failure, the Allies, too, began to shift forces to the north. As a result, both forces moved north at roughly the same speed. Although several savage encounter battles raged during this period, neither side was able to turn the enemy's flank and gain a true strategic advantage. However, the Germans seized several important ports along the English Channel, including Antwerp and Zeebrugge. Von Falkenhayn thought that he saw an important opportunity near the Belgian city of Ypres. Here, the depleted BEF held a very thinly defended portion of the Allied line. Von Falkenhayn hoped to mass troops in the area, break through the British lines and advance to the coast, possibly forcing the BEF to quit the war. After some rather inconclusive probing attacks, he unleashed the full weight of his offensive on 31 October.

Once again, the BEF found itself outnumbered. Seven German divisions struck three under strength divisions of the British I Corps under the command of General Douglas Haig. The Germans, making use of raw but enthusiastic recruits, came forward in waves. The British line threatened to break under the stress but, once again, the BEF relied on its discipline and controlled firepower to save the day. In the end, Haig had to call upon cooks and clerks to man

The shattered Belgian city of Ypres, which was the scene of devastating fighting throughout the war

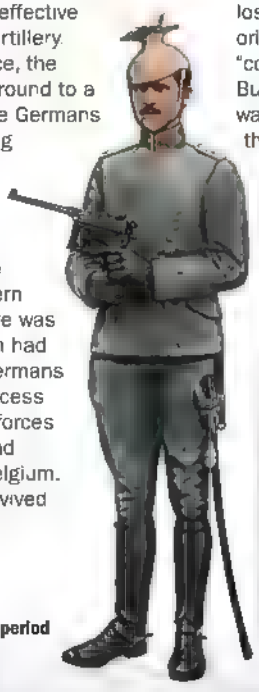
the disintegrating defensive line. Against all odds, the BEF held, repulsing the advance

Von Falkenhayn's forces tried one last time to achieve victory in a ferocious assault down the Menin Road toward Ypres on 11 November Once again, the BEF teetered on the brink of destruction before repulsing the German attacks. As had the Battle of the Aisne, the First Battle of Ypres demonstrated that an entrenched, inferior force could decimate an attacking force through effective use of machine guns and artillery

As winter arrived in France, the war on the Western Front ground to a halt. Both the Allies and the Germans began to dig in, constructing a system of trenches that ran from the English Channel in the north to Switzerland in the south. Never again would there be an open flank on the Western Front. The war of manoeuvre was over and the war of attrition had begun. Undoubtedly, the Germans had achieved the most success in the west in 1914. Their forces were deep inside France and held the vast majority of Belgium. However, the Allies had survived

The Central Powers now faced the spectre of a prolonged war of attrition against a numerically and economically superior alliance. The future looked grim, and the cost of the success of 1914 was staggering In the west, the Germans had lost some 120,000 casualties and the French had lost 65,000. But it was the BEF that suffered the worst fate by comparison. Of a force that numbered only some 70,000 at the outset of the war, it had lost a staggering 55,000 casualties. Thus the original BEF that the Kaiser had derided as a "contemptible little army" had been destroyed. But it had acquitted itself admirably, and it was the actions of the British that had tipped the balance of war in favour of the Allies.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES DEMONSTRATED THAT AN ENTRENCHED, INFERIOR FORCE COULD DECIMATE AN ATTACKING FORCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE USE OF MACHINE GUNS AND ARTILLERY



A German light cavalryman, or hussar, from the First World War period

This feature is an edited extract from the book *The Illustrated History Of World War I* by Andrew Wiest. Published in the UK by Amber Books, it is available from both high-street and online book stores

TOOLS of the TRADE

SNIPER RIFLES

Delivering death from a distance, these **powerfully accurate firearms** have been used by everyone from the German police to US Marines in Vietnam

Military sniper rifles traditionally derived from two sources: first, the improved military rifle, fitted with a telescopic sight and firing match grade ammunition; and secondly, the hunting rifle, which, although accurate, was often too flimsy for field conditions. In the late 1960s, designers began making rifles specifically for sniping. The M40 and the SSG 69 led the way, and were followed by superbly accurate guns such as the L96A1. Recent additions include the 50-calibre heavy sniper rifle, and the .300 Winchester and .338 Lapua Magnum rounds, which are increasingly replacing the 7.62mm NATO cartridge.

▼ DRAGUNOV SVD

Date **1963**
Origin **Soviet Union**
Weight **4.3kg (9.5lb)**
Barrel **61cm (24in)**
Calibre **7.62 × 54R**

The SVD came to be used as a sharpshooter, platoon-support weapon by Warsaw Pact armies in the 1960s. Its four-power, PSO-1 telescopic sight has limited infrared capability.

▲ M40 SNIPER RIFLE

Date **1966**
Origin **US**
Weight **3.1kg (6.75lb)**
Barrel **61cm (24in)**
Calibre **7.62 × 51mm**

A military version of the Remington 700 sporting rifle, the M40 was first used by the US Marine Corps in the Vietnam War. Subsequent models were equipped with a fibreglass stock and a Unertl ten-power scope.

▲ STEYR SSG 69

Date **1969**
Origin **Austria**
Weight **3.9kg (8.5lb)**
Barrel **65cm (25.5in)**
Calibre **7.62 × 51mm**

Developed for the Austrian army, the SSG also proved popular with police organisations. The SSG 69 was unusual in its use of a five-round, rotating spool magazine housed within the rifle body.

This feature is an edited extract from *The Military History Book*, published in the UK by Dorling Kindersley

▶ WALTHER WA2000

Date **1978**
Origin **Germany**
Weight **6.95kg (15.25lb)**
Barrel **65cm (25.5in)**
Calibre **.300 Win Mag/ 7.62mm**

Developed primarily for police use, the WA2000 employed a "bullpup" configuration and a semi-automatic action fed by a six-round magazine. High manufacturing costs ended its production in 1988.

▼ L96A1

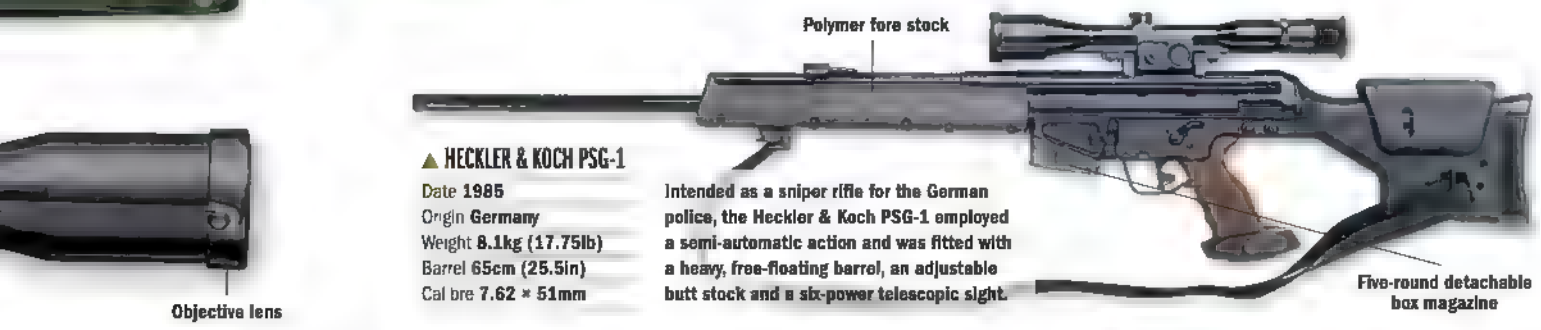
Date **1984**
Origin **UK**
Weight **6.5kg (14.25lb)**
Barrel **65.5cm (25.75in)**
Calibre **7.62 × 51mm**

The British Army's L96A1 sniper rifle was the first to be developed specifically for sniping, and it became the forerunner of a whole series of sniper rifles produced in a variety of calibres.

▲ HECKLER & KOCH PSG-1

Date **1985**
Origin **Germany**
Weight **8.1kg (17.75lb)**
Barrel **65cm (25.5in)**
Calibre **7.62 × 51mm**

Intended as a sniper rifle for the German police, the Heckler & Koch PSG-1 employed a semi-automatic action and was fitted with a heavy, free-floating barrel, an adjustable butt stock and a six-power telescopic sight.



▼ HECATE II SNIPER RIFLE

Date **1993**
Origin **France**
Weight **13.8kg (30.5lb)**
Barrel **70cm (27.5in)**
Calibre **.50 BMG**

As with other Western heavy sniper rifles, the Hecate II fires the .50 BMG (12.7 × 99mm NATO) round, and is based around PGM's metallic-skeleton system, complete with a high-efficiency muzzle brake.

▲ BARRETT MODEL 90

Date **1995**
Origin **US**
Weight **10.7kg (23.5lb)**
Barrel **73.7cm (29in)**
Calibre **.50 BMG**

Ronnie Barrett pioneered the anti-materiel (AM) rifle in the early 1980s. This model, noteworthy for its compact "bullpup" design, is an effective sniping weapon for ranges in excess of 1,800m (5,900ft).

▼ C14 TIMBERWOLF SNIPER RIFLE

Date **2005**
Origin **Canada**
Weight **6.8kg (15lb)**
Barrel **66cm (26in)**
Calibre **.338in Lapua Magnum**

Following recent trends in antipersonnel sniper-rifle design, the Timberwolf has been chambered for the powerful .338in Lapua Magnum round, which extends a rifle's effective range to over 1,200m (3,940ft).

Porus, King of Paurava, Alexander fought his toughest enemy across the River Hydaspes during his first encounter with the Persians.

Great Battles

GAUGAMELA

Greek and Persian Wars: By 334BC, the Persians were the dominant force in Asia. But that year saw the first of three battles between the Empire and the Macedonians, led by the ambitious King Alexander. They would culminate in an almighty conflict that would change the course of history

ALEXANDER, KING OF MACEDON, was a man to be feared and respected. Tutored by the brilliant philosopher Aristotle until the age of 16 and raised on the epic poetry of Homer, he had gone on to succeed his father, Philip II – assassinated at his daughter's wedding when he was 20. (It is suspected that Philip's wife, Olympias, ordered the murder because Philip had taken another wife from nobility, threatening her son Alexander's ascendancy to the throne.) Inspired by the Greek hero Hercules, Alexander had then set about fulfilling his father's dream of crushing the vast and dominant Persian Empire, which stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. But his first task was to quell rebellions from tribes within his own borders – something he achieved without once succumbing to defeat. No wonder he earned the nickname "the Great".

After replenishing his army, Alexander set his sights on overcoming the Persians. His first opportunity to gain an advantage came in 334BC when he encountered an army of Greek mercenaries – in the service of the Persian Great King Darius III – on the banks of the River Granicus in Anatolia (Asia Minor). Arriving with 15,000 men, the Greek Commander Memnon was confident of repelling this young upstart. He hadn't reckoned with Alexander's rugged tenacity and tactical awareness (not to mention the size of his army, which outnumbered the mercenaries by some 3,000 men), and the defenders suffered a comprehensive defeat.

ALEXANDER SET ABOUT FULFILLING HIS FATHER'S DREAM OF CRUSHING THE VAST PERSIAN EMPIRE

Suddenly, Darius was forced to sit up and take notice, and even more so when most of the cities in Anatolia surrendered to the marauding Macedonian army, fortifying Alexander's stronghold in the region. (Darius had, for some time, suffered from dissent within his Empire. It comprised numerous religions and cultures, many of which had been oppressed by the King.)

When Alexander advanced on Cilicia, the south-coastal region of Anatolia and an ideal position for striking either towards Egypt or ▶

The facts

WHO On one side, Alexander the Great (356–323BC) and his battered Macedonian army. On the other, the Persian Great King Darius III (380–330BC) and his massed ranks, who outnumbered the Macedonians almost two to one

WHERE On a wide expanse of levelled land at Gaugamela, near the city of Arbela in what is now northern Iraq

WHEN 1 October 331BC

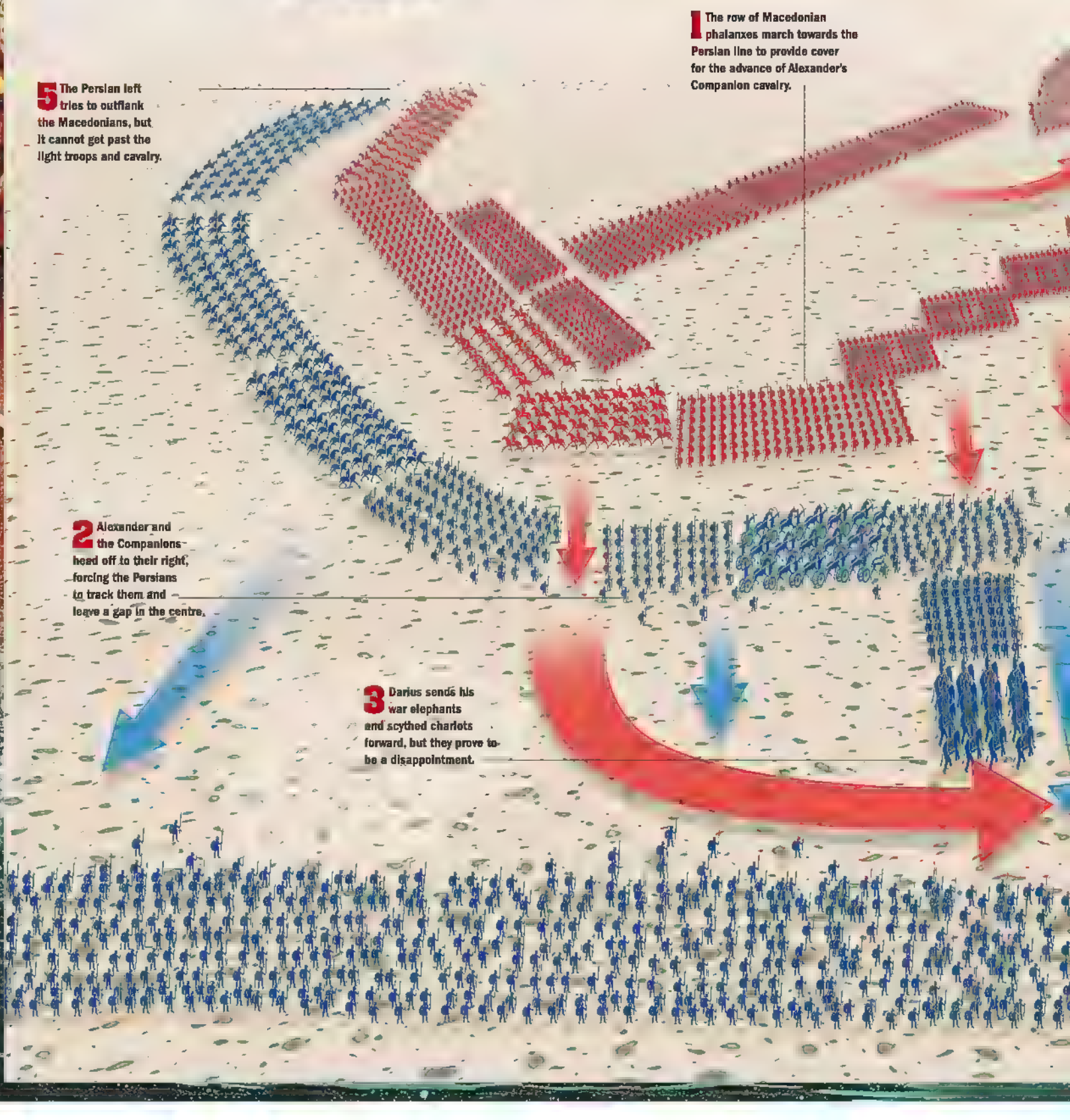
WHY To Alexander and the Greeks before him, the Persian Empire was the very definition of world power. That taken, Alexander and his army would neither face nor fear a rival

OUTCOME While the Persians had a vast numerical advantage, Alexander's strategic acumen and the camaraderie between his soldiers (as opposed to the Persians, who were made of different cultures and religions) gave the Macedonians an unlikely victory.

Great Battles

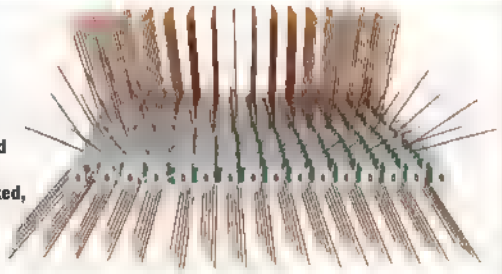
GAUGAMELA

331BC


1 The row of Macedonian phalanxes march towards the Persian line to provide cover for the advance of Alexander's Companion cavalry.
5 The Persian left tries to outflank the Macedonians, but it cannot get past the light troops and cavalry.
2 Alexander and the Companions head off to their right, forcing the Persians to track them and leave a gap in the centre.
3 Darius sends his war elephants and scythed chariots forward, but they prove to be a disappointment.

A FOREST OF SPEARS

A frontal view of a Macedonian phalanx, which could be 16 men across by 16 men deep. These units were primarily used to defend against enemy attack while the cavalry attacked, with the raised *sarissas* shielding the men against projectiles.



OPPOSING FORCES

Macedonians	
Cavalry	7,000
Infantry	40,000
Total	47,000
Persians	
Cavalry	40,000
Infantry	47,000
Scything chariots	200
War elephants	15
Total	87,000

4 Those Persians that do break through the line of phalanxes head to the rear to pilfer the Macedonian baggage train.

6 The Macedonian left wing is hard-pressed by the Persian cavalry until reinforcements appear in the latter's rear.

7 Darius, fearing for his safety, decides to flee from the battlefield, effectively giving the victory to Alexander.

KEY

- Macedonians
- Persians

COMPANION CAVALRY

Alexander may have been a great leader, but he would never have succeeded in conquering Persia without his Companions, the elite mounted guard of the Macedonian army. Regarded as the finest cavalry in the ancient world, it had been built by Alexander's father, Philip (the name Companions derives from the Greek word *hetairoi*, meaning 'close to the King') and comprised a group of highly trained, close-knit horsemen, many of whom were related to Alexander. The camaraderie among the men increased morale and loyalty – two of the most important traits in military campaigning.

the Persian heartlands, Darius took action. With his army, he took up position on the River Pinarus, near what is now the Turkey-Syria border, and awaited Alexander's next move.

If the King was expecting the young Macedonian to be intimidated, he was mistaken and Alexander launched a head-on attack against the Persians in what became the Battle of Issus (named after the nearby town). While Darius' forces were numerically superior, the narrow battlefield meant that he was unable to fully utilise them, and the Macedonians were able to gain an edge. When Alexander launched a personal pursuit of Darius, the Persian King fled, leaving his troops in disarray. Those that survived abandoned their posts and followed their leader into retreat. (Following the battle, Darius' mother, wife and daughters were all captured, and one of those daughters, Statera II, later married Alexander.)

DARIUS' CHARIOTS WERE MODIFIED WITH METRE-LONG BLADES THAT COULD EASILY SLICE A MAN IN HALF

The victorious Macedonian now controlled half of the Persian Empire, but he had no intention of stopping there and he spent the next two years securing the eastern Mediterranean seaboard and seizing Egypt, which fell without a fight. Darius, keen to avoid further humiliation in the field of battle – and regain his family in the process – offered to concede the half of his kingdom that he had already lost. But, despite being at the end of a long line of supply, Alexander was in no mood to barter: he wanted it all or nothing. Replying to Darius' offer, he wrote, *Your ancestors invaded Macedon and Greece, and caused havoc in our country, though we had done nothing to provoke them. As Supreme Commander of all Greece, I invaded Asia because I wished to punish Persia for this act – an act that must be laid wholly to your charge. Do not write to me as to an equal. Everything you possess is now mine. If, on the other hand, you wish to dispute your throne, stand and fight for it and do not run away. Wherever you may hide yourself, be sure I shall seek you out.*

He advanced into Mesopotamia with the intention of colliding with the Persian King in a final, decisive battle, and he soon discovered exactly where that collision was going to take place: capturing a small group of Persian soldiers, he learned that Darius and his army were waiting for them at Gaugamela, near the city of Arbela in what is now northern Iraq.

After building a fortified encampment seven miles away, Alexander carried out a reconnaissance mission of the battleground. The sight that awaited him as he emerged over the crest of the hills must have caused even the famously confident leader to reconsider his plans – at least momentarily. Darius was much better prepared than in previous encounters.

For one thing, he had radically revamped his army, sourcing conscripts from every corner of his Empire – his ranks included everyone from Indian mercenaries, through Scythian tribesmen, to his 10,000-strong, elite army of Immortals.

King Darius breathes his last in this depiction of the Persian ruler's murder by Bessus. Alexander's propagandists claimed that Darius' final words were the blessing of the Macedonian as his successor

– and, according to modern estimates, they now outnumbered the Macedonians by almost two to one. (The Immortals were so named because their number was replenished every time they suffered casualties in battle.)

To accommodate such a massive force, Darius had chosen a wide battleground and flattened the land, removing any obstacles to allow his cavalry and 200 scythed chariots a clear run at the enemy. These vehicles, each pulled by two horses, were modified with metre-long blades extending from the wheels, which could easily slice a man in half. Darius also had at his disposal 15 war elephants – secured from his Indian subjects – which were mounted by archers and javelin-throwers.

Bloody massacre

When Alexander reported back to his camp, his Generals suggested that the Macedonians might be able to overcome their numerical disadvantage by launching a surprise night attack. However, their leader dismissed this idea, proclaiming that, "I will not demean myself by stealing victory like a thief." It turned out to be a masterstroke (or a stroke of luck, depending on which way you look at it): Darius' army, fearing such a nocturnal strike, stayed awake all night while Alexander's forces enjoyed a good night's sleep. When the young warrior awoke the following morning (having overslept), he declared that the battle was already won.

The Macedonians advanced on the morning of 1 October 331BC. Alexander took up his usual position on the right flank, while his second-in-command, Parmenion, and his men stuck to the left. (While he was, at the time, a trusted General of Alexander, Parmenion was later sentenced to death by his leader for conspiring to murder him.) Stationed between the two cavalries were two rows of the awe-inspiring Macedonian phalanx – a rectangular formation, typically 16 men wide by 16 men deep, that had been developed by King Philip and used in many previous conflicts. Raised high above their heads were their *sarissas* – 15-18ft wooden poles with sharpened iron tips.

Alexander's strategy was simple: with the phalanxes providing a shield in the centre, he and his Companion cavalry (see box, opposite page) would gallop off to the right at an oblique angle. In order to outflank him, the Persians would be forced to pull further and further to their left, into treacherous, unflattened terrain. This would allow a gap to open up in the Persian line, which Alexander and his cavalry could penetrate with devastating effect.

The plan worked brilliantly. With Alexander otherwise engaged, Darius – positioned at the centre of the Persian horde – played what he believed to be his trump card, ordering his scythed chariots to advance. However, while these deadly vehicles had been used to great effect against lesser, ill-prepared armies, against the hardened veterans of Alexander's battalion the outcome was disappointing – the phalanxes merely opened ranks, allowing the chariots to pass through. They were then set upon by Macedonian infantry at the rear, and a massacre ensued. Darius' second secret weapon was no more successful, with the war elephants proving too unwieldy to be truly effective.

With Darius unprotected, both by his chariots and his left flank, Alexander seized his chance. Forming his men into a wedge, he charged towards the Persian King before launching his spear (it missed by inches). At this point,

Winning hearts and minds was the purpose behind Alexander's kindly treatment of Darius' surrendered family, depicted here in a 1566 painting by Paolo Veronese. His later married son daughter, Stateira II

Darius – as he had done at Issus – knew that the battle was lost and fled the area. The great Greek historian Plutarch, in his biography *Life Of Alexander*, spoke of the leader's flight:

Darius, now seeing all was lost; that those who were placed in front of him were broken and beat back upon him; that he could not turn or disengage his chariot without great difficulty, the wheels being clogged and entangled among the dead bodies, was glad to quit his chariot and arms. Mounting, it is said, upon a mare that had been taken from her foal, he betook himself to flight.

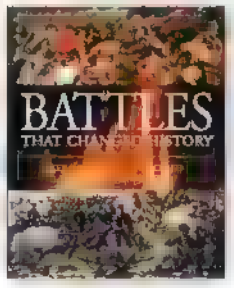
While this wasn't the first time that Darius had fled the battlefield in an encounter with Alexander's army, it was to be the last: the Persian King decamped to Ecbatana (on the site of what is now the Iranian city of Hamadān), leaving his young nemesis to take possession of Babylon and Susa. When Alexander arrived at the Persian capital of Persepolis in 330BC, he allowed his troops to loot its treasures, and he later burned down the great palace.

Gung-ho madness

Darius did try to build a new army, but the sheer number of casualties inflicted by the Macedonians at Gaugamela meant that he could never again threaten Alexander. Besides, his flight from battle only bought him a few more weeks of life: one of his subordinates, Bessus, executed the King before attempting in vain to lead a resistance against Alexander.

Darius and Bessus were not the only ones to fall against the might of the young Macedonian. Becoming the Great King of Persia at the age of 25, over the next eight years Alexander would lead his army a further 11,000 miles, founding over 70 cities and creating an Empire that stretched across three continents and covered around two million square miles. But his victory at Gaugamela will always be remembered as his greatest achievement. Darius' cowardice notwithstanding, the odds were stacked against Alexander that day, but a combination of courage, tactical genius, the loyalty of his troops, and perhaps a small amount of gung-ho madness, turned the battle in his favour.

Alexander was eventually defeated – by illness – and he died in Babylon in 323BC. But his military strategies remain an inspiration to historians and Generals alike. Indeed, his tactic of rapidly attacking a single spot at the front of enemy lines has been lauded as the model on which the German Blitzkrieg was based. But while the Germans ultimately failed, the same cannot be said of the man they call "the Great".



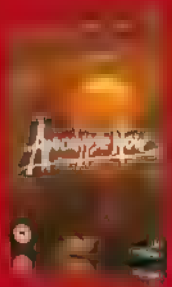
This feature is an edited extract from the book *Battles That Have Changed History*, published by Amber Books. It is available from www.amberbooks.co.uk (RRP £24.95)

The Ten Greatest VIETNAM WAR FILMS

From Russian roulette to rogue Colonels, psychedelic drugs to shot-down pilots... *History Of War* has spent the past month watching every movie about the Vietnam War, and here we name the best...

1 APOCALYPSE NOW

Director **Francis Ford Coppola, 1979**



Famous almost as much for the trouble Francis Ford Coppola had in making it as for the quality of the film itself (check out the "making of" documentary, *Hearts Of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, which details how Marlon Brando turned up on the set overweight and Martin Sheen suffered a heart attack during filming), the double Oscar-winning *Apocalypse Now* charts Sheen's Special Operations officer Benjamin Willard on his journey along the Nung River, after he's been commissioned to kill a rogue Colonel, Walter Kurtz (Brando). Tensions ride high on the boat, with the drug-addled crew blaming Willard for placing them in constant peril from Viet Cong attack. The ending is part of cinematic history...

2 PLATOON

Director **Oliver Stone, 1986**

Starring Charlie Sheen, Willem Dafoe and Tom Berenger, *Platoon* was the first of Oliver Stone's three movies inspired by his time serving as an infantryman during the Vietnam War (it's believed that he wrote the screenplay in response to the vision of war depicted in John Wayne's 1968 film *The Green Berets*). It follows Bravo Company, 25th Infantry Division as they fight near the Cambodian border, and features several memorable and harrowing scenes – not least the iconic moment when Dafoe's character falls to his knees amid a hail of gunfire and the strains of Barber's *Adagio For Strings*. It's the palpable tension of jungle-based warfare that makes *Platoon* one of the best war films of all time, and it rightly received Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director.

3 FULL METAL JACKET

Director **Stanley Kubrick, 1987**

Kicking off on Parris Island, South Carolina, *Full Metal Jacket* charts the experiences of a group of Marine Corps recruits, as they endure the rigours of boot camp under the watchful eye of nightmarish drill instructor Gunnery Sergeant Hartman (played with terrifying menace by veteran actor R Lee Ermey). Not all of them make it through... The film then catapults us into the thick of the Vietnam War itself, where one of those recruits – Joker, played by Matthew Modine – has been deployed as a military journalist. After his base is attacked by the North Vietnamese at the start of the Tet Offensive, Joker joins up with a fellow graduate of Parris Island to take part in the Battle of Hué. Hard-hitting and brutal, *Full Metal Jacket* won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay and goes down as one of Stanley Kubrick's greatest cinematic achievements.

4 THE DEER HUNTER

Director **Michael Cimino, 1978**

Michael Cimino's masterpiece is a deeply affecting tale in three parts – the first played out in the US, the second in Vietnam and the third in a combination of the two. It tells the story of a close-knit group of Russian-American steel workers who embark on a final deer hunt prior to leaving to fight in the war. Considered controversial at the time, the film is best-known for its initial Russian roulette scene, where characters played by Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken are subjected to psychological torture by their North Vietnamese captors. *The Deer Hunter* is a tale of friendship, regret and madness, powerfully played by a cast that also includes Meryl Streep and John Cazale.

5 BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

Director **Oliver Stone, 1989**

The second film in Oliver Stone's Vietnam trilogy explores the adverse reaction war veterans received on returning to the US. Tom Cruise plays Ron Kovic, a student who's convinced to enlist as a Marine and fight in Vietnam. However, his second tour, in 1967, proves disastrous – first, he's involved in killing Vietnamese civilians, then he inadvertently kills one of his own comrades. Finally, he's shot during a firefight and paralysed from the chest down, condemning him to a squalid hospital and, ultimately, life in a wheelchair. Stone received the Best Director Oscar for his efforts, and it's not hard to see why.

6 HAMBURGER HILL

Director **John Irvin, 1987**

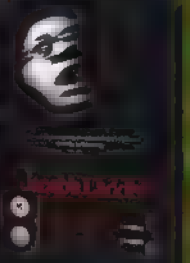
Hill 937, also known as Ap Bia Mountain, also known as Hamburger Hill. In May 1969, US troops from the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment (part of the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division) began their attempt to take the hill from heavily dug-in NVA forces. It was to become a ferocious encounter, with unexpected numbers of North Vietnamese defending their desolate hill – which actually had little strategic value – and the result was a vast loss of life on both sides. John Irvin's movie brilliantly captures the events of the battle, which occurred amid a backdrop of anti-war protests in the US and, towards the end of the campaign, torrential rain and mudslides. Visceral, poignant and frighteningly life-like, *Hamburger Hill* is filmmaking at its best.

7 RESCUE DAWN

Director **Werner Herzog, 2006**

In this based-on-a-real-life story, Christian Bale stars as Dieter Dengler, a German-born US Navy pilot whose A-1 Skyraider was shot down whilst flying over Laos during the Vietnam War. Captured by the Pathet Lao, he is tortured and beaten (although the worst of Dengler's torture has been omitted from the final cut, as the film is rated 12) before being taken to a prison camp. The suspense builds as the film follows Dengler's escape from the camp, and his subsequent rescue. A movie made on a budget of just $10million, *Rescue Dawn* provides a chilling glimpse into the horrors of being a prisoner of war, with some superb acting from Bale.

8 JACOB'S LADDER



Director **Adrian Lyne, 1990**

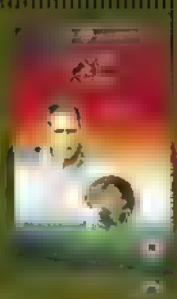
Visually shocking and as dark as coal, Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder* stunned cinema audiences when it was released back in 1990. It follows Jacob Singer (Tim Robbins), a former soldier with the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam who starts experiencing horrific hallucinations when he returns home to New York City. Are they the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome or is something more sinister afoot? As Singer tries to uncover the truth behind his plight, he starts learning of mysterious deaths among his friends and a Government plot to turn soldiers into psychotic killing machines using psychedelic drugs. Part horror, part detective story, *Jacob's Ladder* is sometimes confusing (repeated viewings are certainly recommended) and frequently horrific, and remains a cult classic to this day.

9 WE WERE SOLDIERS

Director **Randall Wallace, 2002**

Based on the book *We Were Soldiers Once... And Young* by Lieutenant General Hal Moore and journalist Joseph Galloway, this film centres around the two men's experiences in one of the first battles of the Vietnam War. In 1965, 400 US soldiers, many of them inexperienced in the field of combat, were sent by helicopter relays into the Ia Drang Valley – the so-called Valley of Death – to face an unknown quantity of North Korean troops. When they landed, they discovered almost 4,000 awaiting them. Mel Gibson gives a surprisingly gritty performance as Moore in a film that is as relentless in its portrayal of battle as it is in its exploration of the effects on the wives and children back home. As for director Randall Wallace, he was no stranger to films depicting war, having penned the screenplay for the Gibson-directed 1995 Oscar-winning epic *Braveheart*.

10 HEAVEN & EARTH



Director **Oliver Stone, 1993**

Heaven & Earth is Oliver Stone's third film inspired by the Vietnam conflict, and follows the life of a Vietnamese village girl caught up in the horror of war. First tortured by South Vietnamese troops, she is later raped by members of the Viet Cong for being a suspected traitor. She and her family are then forced to move to Saigon, where she falls pregnant to the master of the house she works for. When she meets and falls in love with a US Gunner Sergeant (played neurotically by Tommy Lee Jones), the couple return to the US to live, but yet more strife is on its way. Deeply moving, *Heaven & Earth* is a rare example of the Vietnam War as seen from a Vietnamese perspective.

THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION

Operation Mincemeat

Second World War: A dead homeless person. A submarine. A briefcase full of faked documents… As bestselling author Ben Macintyre explains, Operation Mincemeat was one of the Second World War's most ingenious and effective plans – and helped the Allies to swing the conflict in their favour…

ON A THUNDERY NIGHT IN September 1942, an RAF Catalina FP119 seaplane travelling from Plymouth to Gibraltar crashed off Cadiz on the Atlantic coast of Spain, killing everyone on board. Among the passengers was Paymaster Lt James Hadden Turner, a Royal Navy courier who was carrying a top-secret letter from General Mark Clark – the US Deputy Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force – to the British Governor and Commander in Chief of Gibraltar, General Noel Mason-MacFarlane. The contents revealed that General Dwight Eisenhower would be arriving on the rock imminently, in preparation for Operation Torch – the invasion of North Africa by Allied troops. When Turner's body was washed up, Spanish authorities turned it over to British forces, the letter unopened in his pocket. It had been a close escape for Allied security – had the Germans discovered the letter, the whole operation would've been blown, risking the lives of thousands. But what's more, the incident provided the inspiration for a brilliant and daring plan that would swing the war in Allied favour.

BACKSTORY
Despite the Allied forces' successful campaign in North Africa, the Second World War still hung very much in the balance. Seizing control of the island of Sicily was crucial, as it would facilitate the passage of Allied ships through the Mediterranean and deeper into continental Europe.

Following the capture of North Africa, the Allies turned their attention to Sicily. Tactically speaking, it was an obvious choice – control of the Italian island would open the Mediterranean to Allied shipping and allow the invasion of continental Europe – and the Germans knew it. So somehow the Allies needed to convince their enemy that their intentions lay elsewhere: namely, Greece and Sardinia. With the Paymaster Lt Turner episode fresh in their minds, the British Secret Service hatched a plan to dispose of a corpse – planted with fake documents detailing a phoney military advance towards those two destinations – in a place where the enemy would find it. Called Operation Mincemeat, it would take months to plan and involve some of the most cunning brains in British intelligence…

A Catalina seaplane was an option for ditching the body, but was considered too dangerous

Disposing of the corpse

Even [secretary of British intelligence unit the Twenty Committee] Charles Cholmondeley's elastic mind was having trouble wrapping itself around the problem of how to transport a corpse from London to Spain, then drop it in the sea without being spotted, in such a way that it would appear to be the victim of an air crash. [The corpse was that of a Welsh homeless man, Glyndwr Michael, who had died after ingesting rat poison.] There were, he reckoned, four possible methods of shipping "Major Martin" [the fake identity they had given the dead man] to his destination. The body could be transported aboard a surface ship, most easily on one of the naval escorts accompanying merchant vessels in and out of Huelva port. This option was rejected – nothing was more likely to attract the attention of Adolf Clauss and his spies than a Royal Navy ship lingering in shallow waters. An alternative would be to take the body by plane and throw it out at the right spot. The problem was that "if the body were dropped in this way, it might smash to pieces on landing".

A seaplane might be able to land if the conditions were right, and slip the body into the water more gently. Cholmondeley drew up a possible scenario: the plane would "come in from out at sea simulating engine trouble, drop a bomb to simulate the crash, go out to sea as quickly as possible, return (as if it were a second flying boat), drop a flare as if searching down the first aircraft, land and then, while ostensibly searching for survivors, drop the body and take off again". On examination, this plan seemed too elaborate. Any number of things could go wrong, including a real plane crash.

A submarine would be better. The drop could be carried out at night, and if there was

Members of Section 17M, the naval department of British intelligence that helped devise Operation Mincemeat plan. Ewan Montagu is front row, second right

insufficient depth of water, a dinghy could take the body closer inshore. The captain could monitor the winds and tides in order to surface and drop the body at the optimum moment. "After the body has been planted, it would help the illusion if a 'set piece' giving a flare and explosion with delayed action fuse could be left to give the impression of an aircraft crash." The only problem, as Cholmondeley put it, was the "technical difficulties in keeping the body fresh during the passage". Submariners were a hardy bunch, able to withstand long periods underwater in the most foetid conditions. But even they would surely object to having a rotting corpse as a shipmate. Moreover, the operation was top secret: the presence of a dead body on a submarine would not remain secret very long.

"Of these methods," Cholmondeley concluded, "a submarine is the best (if the preservation of the body can be achieved)." There is no easy way to smuggle a dead body aboard a submarine, let alone prevent it from rotting in the warm, fuggy atmosphere of a submarine hold. For help, Cholmondeley turned to Charles Fraser Smith of Q-Branch, whose job was to furnish secret agents, saboteurs and prisoners of war with gizmos such as miniature cameras, invisible ink and hidden weaponry. (Fraser Smith provided Ian Fleming with equipment for some of his more outlandish plans, and doubtless helped to inform the character of Q, the eccentric inventor in the James Bond films.)

Fraser Smith possessed a wildly ingenious but supremely practical mind. He invented garlic-flavoured chocolate to be consumed by agents parachuting into France, in order that their breath should smell appropriately Gallic as soon as they landed; he made shoelaces containing a vicious steel garrotte, and created a compass hidden in a button which unscrewed clockwise, based on the theory that the "unswerving logic of the German mind" would never guess that something might unscrew the wrong way.

SUBMARINERS WERE A HARDY BUNCH, ABLE TO WITHSTAND LONG PERIODS UNDERWATER. BUT EVEN THEY WOULD SURELY OBJECT TO HAVING A ROTTING CORPSE AS A SHIPMATE

With the help of Fraser Smith, Cholmondeley drew up a blueprint for the world's first underwater corpse transporter. This was a tubular canister, six feet six inches long and almost two feet in diameter, with a double skin made from 22-gauge steel, the space between the skins packed with asbestos wool. One end would be welded closed, while the other had an airtight steel lid, which was screwed onto a rubber gasket with 16 bolts. A folding handle was attached to either end, and a box spanner was clipped to the lid for easy removal. With the body inside, Cholmondeley estimated that the entire package would weigh 400lb and fit snugly into the pressure hull of a submarine. [Leading pathologist] Sir Bernard Spilsbury was consulted. ▶

The corpse of "Major Martin" was actually Glyndwr Michael, a homeless man who had died after ingesting rat poison. Far right: Major Martin's fake ID card

Mary Evans

Oxygen, he explained, was the cause of rapid decomposition. But "if most of the oxygen had previously been excluded" from the tube with dry ice, and if the canister was airtight, and if the body was carefully packed around with dry ice, the corpse would "keep perfectly satisfactorily" and remain as cold as it had been inside the morgue. Fraser Smith's task, then, was to design "an enormous Thermos flask", thin enough to fit down the torpedo hatch. The Ministry of Aircraft Production was instructed to build this container as fast as possible, without being told what it was for. On the outside should be stencilled the words: "HANDLE WITH CARE – OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS – FOR SPECIAL FOS SHIPMENT."

Reading the tides

[Naval intelligence officer, Lt Commander Ewen] Montagu, meanwhile, contacted Admiral Sir Claude Barry, the Flag Officer in command of Submarines (FOS), to find out which submarine might best be used for the mission. Barry replied that British submarines passed Huelva frequently, en route to Malta; indeed, HM Seraph was currently in Scotland, preparing to return to the Mediterranean in April. The Seraph was commanded by Lieutenant Bill Jewell, a young captain who had already carried out several secret assignments and who could be relied on for complete discretion. Montagu drew up some draft operational orders for Jewell and arranged to meet the officer in London.

The hydrographer at the Admiralty submitted his report on the winds and tides off the coast of Huelva. He was distinctly non-committal, pointing out that "the Spaniards and Portuguese publish practically nothing about tides, tidal streams and currents off their coasts". Moreover, "the tides in that area run mainly up and down the coast". If the object was dropped in the right place, in the right conditions, "wind between S[outh] and W[est] might set it towards the head of the bight near P Huelva". However, if the body did wash up on the shore, there was no guarantee it would stay there because "if it did not strand, it would be carried out again on the ebb". This was less than perfect, but not discouraging enough to call off the operation. In any case, Montagu reflected, the "object" in question was a man in a life jacket – larger than the object the hydrographer had been asked to speculate about – and might be expected to catch an onshore wind and drift landwards. He concluded: "The currents on the coast are unhelpful at any point, but the prevailing southwest wind will bring the body ashore if Jewell can ditch it near enough to the coast."

A swamp of detail

In the last week of March, Montagu drew up a seven-point progress report for Johnnie Bevan [the man in overall control of wartime deception]. Bevan had just returned from North Africa, where he had coordinated plans for Operation Barclay with Lt Colonel Dudley Clarke. Relations between Montagu and Bevan remained tense. "I am not quite clear as to who is in sole charge of administrative arrangements in connection with this operation," Bevan wrote to Montagu in a note calculated to rile him. "I think we all agree that there are a number of things that might go wrong." Montagu was in no doubt that he was in sole charge of the operation, even if Bevan did not see it that way. Privately, Montagu accused Bevan of "thinking it couldn't come off and disclaiming all responsibility".

Montagu's report laid out the state of play: the body was almost ready, with Major Martin's uniform and accoutrements selected, and the canister was under construction. There was also a deadline. "Mincemeat will be taken out as an inside passenger in HMS Seraph, leaving the northwest coast of this country probably on the 10th April." That was just two weeks away.

Montagu and Cholmondeley had sought to arrange everything before obtaining final approval for the operation, on the assumption that senior officers were far less likely to meddle when presented with a *fait very nearly accompli*. But there was now little time to finalise the last, and most important, piece of the puzzle. Montagu's letter to Bevan ended on a note of exasperation: "All the details are now 'buttoned up,'" he wrote. "All that is required are the official documents."

The debate about what should, or should not, be contained in Major Martin's official letters had already taken up more than a month. It is doubtful whether any documents in the war were subjected to closer scrutiny, or more revisions. Draft after draft was proposed by Montagu and Cholmondeley, revised by more senior officers and committees, scrawled over, retyped, sent off for approval, and then modified, amended,

Operation Mincemeat Timeline

5 SEPTEMBER 1942
An RAF Catalina FP119 seaplane crashes off the coast of Spain. The body of Royal Navy courier Paymaster-Lt James Hadden Turner is equipped with top-secret documents – is retrieved from the Atlantic Ocean by Spanish authorities. The incident inspires British intelligence to formulate a deliberate plan along the same lines, with the intention of fooling German forces.

22 JANUARY 1943
Following the Allies' successful campaign in North Africa, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D Roosevelt make an agreement to invade the island of Sicily.

26 JANUARY 1943
Welsh homeless man Glyndwr Michael is found in an abandoned warehouse in London, apparently having ingested rat poison. He dies in hospital two days later.

4 FEBRUARY 1943
Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu present the rest of the Twenty Committee with a draft of Operation Mincemeat, which will involve disposing of Michael's corpse off the coast of Spain.

15 APRIL 1943
Colonel Johnnie Bevan informs Churchill of the plan at a secret war bunker in London. Operation Mincemeat is approved.

19 APRIL 1943
HMS Seraph sets sail for Spain, carrying the corpse of "Major Martin".

rejected and rewritten all over again. There was general agreement that, as Montagu had originally envisaged, the main plank of the deception should be a personal letter from Lt General Sir Archibald Nye [Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff] to General Sir Harold Alexander [Commander of British forces in the eastern part of the Mediterranean]. It was also agreed that the letter should identify Greece as the target of the next Allied assault, and Sicily as the cover target. Beyond this, there was very little agreement about anything at all.

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE LETTER SHOULD IDENTIFY GREECE AS THE TARGET OF THE NEXT ALLIED ASSAULT. BEYOND THIS, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE AGREEMENT ABOUT ANYTHING AT ALL

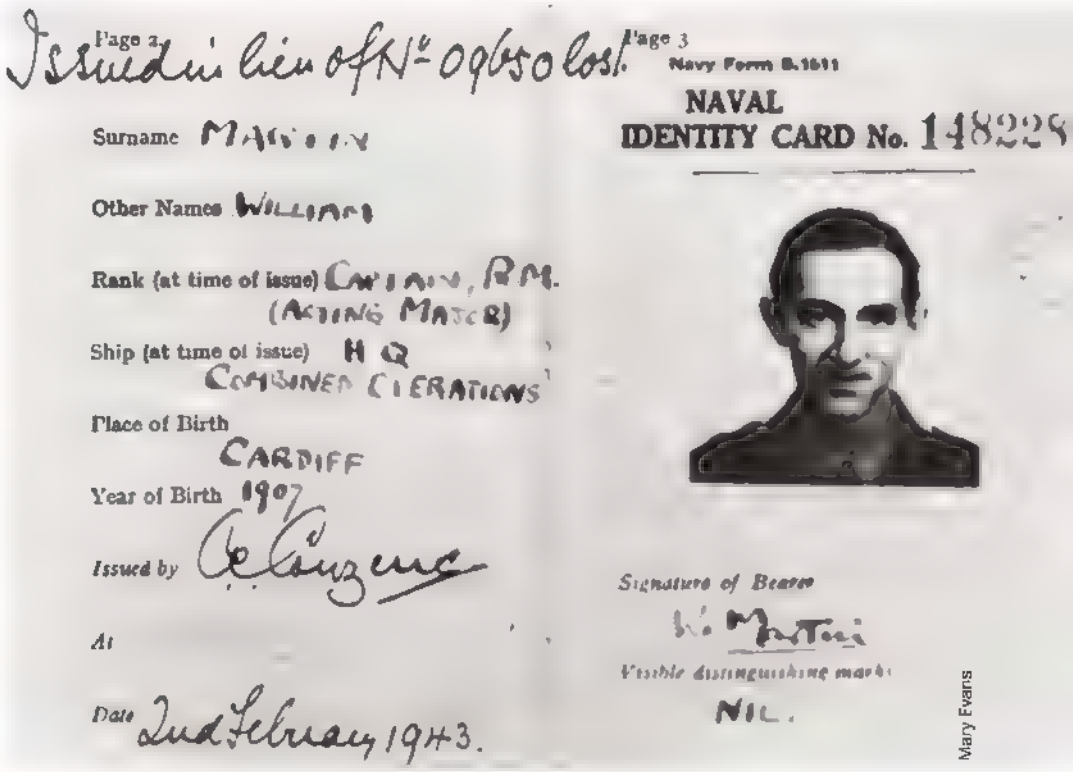
Almost everyone who read the letter thought it could do with "alteration and improvement". Everyone from the Twenty Committee to the Chiefs of Staff had a different idea about how to achieve this. The Admiralty thought it needed to be "more personal". The Air Ministry insisted the letter should indicate that the bombing of Sicilian airfields was in preparation for invading Greece, and not a prelude to an attack on Sicily itself. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, General Sir Alan Brooke, wanted "a letter in answer to one from General Alexander". The Director of Plans thought the operation "should not be undertaken earlier than two months before the real operation", in case the real plans changed. Bevan wondered whether the draft letter sounded "too official", and insisted, "We must get Dudley Clarke's approval as it's his theatre." Clarke himself, in a flurry of cables from Algiers, warned of the "danger of overloading this communication", and stuck to the view that it was "a mistake to play for high deception stakes".

Bevan remained anxious: "If anything miscarries and the Germans appreciate that the letter is a plant, they would no doubt realise that we intend to attack Sicily." Clarke framed his own draft, further enraging Montagu, who regarded this effort as "merely a lowish-grade innuendo at the target of the type that has often been, and could always be, put over by a double agent". The Director of Plans agreed that "Mincemeat should be capable of much greater things". Bevan then also tried his hand at a letter, which again Montagu dismissed as "of a type which could've been sent by signal and would not have appeared genuine to the Germans if carried in the way this document would be". There was even a debate over how to spell the Greek city Kalamata. The operation seemed to be running into a swamp of detail.

Typically, Montagu tried to insert some tongue-in-cheek jokes into the letter. He wanted Nye to write: "I wonder whether you could ask one of your ADCs to send me a case of oranges or lemons. One misses fresh fruit terribly, especially this time of year when there is really nothing to buy." The Chiefs of Staff excised this: General Nye could not be made to look like a scrounger. Even to the Germans. *Especially* to the Germans. So Montagu tried another line: "How are you getting on with Eisenhower? I gather he is not bad to work with..." That was also removed: too flippant for a General. Next, Montagu attempted a quip at the expense of the notoriously big-headed General Montgomery: "Do you still take the same size in hats, or do you need a couple of sizes larger, like Monty?" That, too, was censored. Finally, Montagu managed to squeeze a tiny ha'p'orth joke in at the end, relating to Montgomery's much-mocked habit of issuing orders every day. "What is wrong with Monty? He hasn't issued an order of the day for at least 48 hours." That stayed in, for now.

Montagu's temper, never slow to ignite, began smouldering dangerously as the deadline neared and the key letter was tweaked and poked, polished and moulded. Page after page of drafts went into the files, covered with Montagu's increasingly enraged squiggles and remarks.

Finally, the Chiefs of Staff came up with a good suggestion: why not have General Nye draft the letter himself, since this would be "the best way of giving it an authentic touch"? Archie Nye was no wordsmith, but he knew General Alexander fairly well, and he knew the sound of his own voice. Nye read all the earlier drafts, then put the letter into his own words. The key passage referred to General Sir Henry "Jumbo" Wilson, then Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East, making it appear that he would be spearheading an attack on Greece; it indicated,


Page 2 Issued in lieu of No. 09650 lost. Page 3 Navy Form S.1611

NAVAL IDENTITY CARD No. 148229

Surname MARTIN

Other Names WILLIAMS

Rank (at time of issue) CAPTAIN, R.M. (ACTING MAJOR)

Ship (at time of issue) H.Q. COMBINED OPERATIONS

Place of Birth CARDIFF

Year of Birth 1907

Issued by

At

Date 2nd February 1943.

Signature of Bearer W. Martin

Visible distinguishing marks NIL.

Mary Evans

30 APRIL 1943
Seraph reaches the southern coast of Spain, near the port of Huelva. Here, the body of Major Martin is dropped into the sea. It is later discovered by local fisherman Jose Antonio Rey Maria.

2 MAY 1943
Major Martin is buried in Huelva. His funeral is attended by a group of mourners, both official and unofficial. His death certificate cites "drowning" as the cause of his demise.

9 MAY 1943
Karl-Erich Kuhlenthal rushes to Berlin to present his superior commanders with his "discovery" in Major Martin's briefcase.

19 MAY 1943
Adolf Hitler holds a military conference, in which he refers to the expected Allied assault on Greece.

4 JUNE 1943
Major Martin's death is reported by *The Times* newspaper, in a move designed to further deceive German intelligence.

7 JUNE 1943
The Hotel St George in Algiers hosts a conference, at which Churchill and General Eisenhower finalise plans for the invasion of Sicily.

10 JULY 1943
Allied forces invade Sicily in Operation Husky.

London S.W.1.
23rd April 1943

PERSONAL AND MOST SECRET

My Dear Alex,
I am taking advantage of sending you a personal letter by hand of one of Mountbatten's officers, to give you the inside history of our recent exchanges of cables about Mediterranean operations and their attendant cover plans.

You may have felt our decisions were somewhat arbitrary, but I can assure you that the C.O.S. Committee gave the most careful consideration both to your recommendation and to Jumbo's.

We have had recent information that the Boche have been reinforcing and strengthening their defences in Greece and Crete, and C.I.G.S. felt that our forces for the assault were insufficient. It was agreed by the Chiefs of Staff that the 5th Division should be reinforced by one Brigade Group for the assault on the beach south of CAPE ARAXOS, and that a similar reinforcement should be made for 56th Division at KALAMATA. We are earmarking the necessary forces and shipping.

Jumbo Wilson had proposed to select SICILY as the cover target for 'HUSKY', but we had already chosen it as cover for operation 'BRIMSTONE'. The C.O.S. Committee went into the whole question exhaustively again and came to the conclusion that in view of the preparations in Algeria, the amphibious training which will be taking place on the Tunisian coast and the heavy bombardment which will be put down to neutralise the Sicilian airfields, we should stick to our plan for making it the cover for 'BRIMSTONE'. Indeed, we stand a very good chance of making him think we will go for Sicily - it is an obvious objective and one about which he must be nervous. On the other hand, they felt there wasn't much hope of persuading the Boche that the extensive preparations in the Eastern Mediterranean were also directed at Sicily. For this reason they have told Wilson his cover plan should be something nearer the spot - ie the Dodecanese. Since our relations with Turkey are now so obviously closer, the Italians must be pretty apprehensive about these islands.

I imagine you will agree with these arguments. I know you will have your hands more than full at the moment and you haven't much chance of discussing future operations with Eisenhower. But if, by any chance, you do want to support Wilson's proposal, I hope you will let us know soon, because we can't delay much longer. I am very sorry we weren't able to meet your wishes about the new commander of the Guards Brigade. Your own nominee was down with a bad attack of the flu and not likely to be really fit for another few weeks. No doubt, however, you know Forster personally; he has done extremely well in command of a brigade at home, and is, I think, the best fellow available.

You must be about as fed up as we are with the whole question of war medals and Purple Hearts. We all agree with you that we don't want to offend our American friends, but there is a good deal more to it than that.

If our troops who happen to be serving in one particular theatre are to get extra decorations merely because the Americans happen to be serving there too, we will be faced with a good deal of discontent among those troops fighting elsewhere perhaps just as bitterly - perhaps more so. My own feeling is that we should thank the Americans for their kind offer, but say firmly it would cause too many anomalies and we are sorry we can't accept. But it is on the agenda for the next Military Members Meeting, and I hope you will have a decision very soon.

Best of Luck
Yours ever,
Archie Nye

General the Hon Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander, G.C.B.,
C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C.
Headquarters, 18th Army Group

A submarine (HMS Seraph) was used to transport the body of the fictional Major Martin to the coast of Spain

fa se y, that S cily was be ng set up as a cover target for a simultaneous assault in another part of the Mediterranean; it referred to some run-of-the-m ll army matters, which also happened to be authentic, such as the appointment of a new Commander of the Guards Brigade and an offer from the Americans to award Purple Hearts to British so diers serving a ongside American troops. Above all, it sounded right. Montagu, after so many weeks spent trying to pull off the forgery himself, admitted that Nye's letter was "idea y suited to the purpose". The false targets were "not blatant y ment oned, although very c early ind cated", allowing the enemy to put two and two together, making at least s x

Bevan wrote to Nye, asking him to have the letter typed up, then to s gn it in non-waterproof ink, since a waterproof s gnature might ra se suspic ons. "Your signature in ink might become illegible owing to contact with sea water and, consequently, it would be advisable to type your t tle and name underneath the actual s gnature."

Bevan had one final tweak. "Genera Wilson is referred to three times, as 'Jumbo', 'Jumbo Wilson' and 'Wilson'. I wonder whether it would not be more p ausible to refer to h m on the first occas on as 'Jumbo Wilson' and 'Jumbo' thereafter." Nye rep ied: "I referred to him variously intentionally (and comm tted a couple of - almost – grammatica errors) so as not to be guilty of too meticulous a letter." At the last moment, Nye dropped the joke about Monty: "I would never have written such a thing. It might have struck a fa se note and, if so, d d one rea y ga n anything by taking such a risk?" The Genera toyed with a joke of his own: "PS We saw you on the cinema the other night and Colleen thought you looked uncommon y like Ha le Selass e!" General Alexander did look a little ike the Ethiop an Emperor, and Nye thought this remark "m ght help to strike the right note of informality". On the other hand, General Nye had no sense of humour and was enough of a realist to know it. His final letter was joke-free. He sent it back with a note and a flourish: "Now I hope your friends will ensure de ivery." It was, in Montagu's words, "a truly magnificent letter".

Something fishy

The letter twanged every chord. It ind cated that there was not one assault p anned, but two: Genera Wilson's army under Montgomery would attack two points in Greece under the codename "Husky"; General A exander, under Eisenhower's command, was preparing to launch a separate attack in the western Med terranean, codenamed "Brimstone". The cover target for this latter operation was Sicily. The letter openly stated the intention to deceive the Germans into believing an attack on Sic y was imminent, pointing out that amph bious training in North Africa and the bombardment of S cilian airfields would tend to support that mpression. The training and bombing were, of course, preparat ons for the real attack on S cily. Husky was the genuine codename for that invasion; if the Germans came across any allusion to Husky in the future, having read Nye's letter they would, with luck, assume that th s referred to the attack on Greece

Nye's letter hinted at a second assault in the western Mediterranean, but did not say where the fictional Operation Brimstone would be aimed. Nor d d it explain why such an important letter was being carried by th s particular officer. There was nothing to exp ain what Major Martin was doing in North Africa, on the eve of a major invasion. A second letter was ca ed for. Since Mart n was on the staff of Combined Operations, Colonel Neville of the Roya Marines, who had been consulted on Major Martin's uniform, drafted a letter to be s gned by Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations, and addressed it to Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander in-Chief in the Mediterranean. Cunningham was Eisenhower's nava deputy, a hard-grained Scot with red-rimmed eyes who had been in uniform ever since the Boer War Like Alexander, h s name and seniority would be well known to the Germans; unlike Alexander, there was nothing smooth and refined about Admiral Cunningham, who preferred the cut and thrust of batt e to the comforts of high rank. H s favourite express on, when things seemed to be going too we l, was: "It's too velvety-arsed and Rolls-Royce for me."

THE FALSE TARGETS WERE "NOT BLATANTLY MENTIONED, ALTHOUGH VERY CLEARLY INDICATED", ALLOWING THE ENEMY TO PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER, MAKING AT LEAST SIX

The letter clearly indicated that Martin, a trusted expert on landing craft, was coming out

In reply quote: S.R. I 924/43
Combined Operations Headquarters
IA Richmond Terrace
Whitehall, S.W.I
21st April

Dear Admiral of the Fleet,

I promised VCIGS that Major Martin would arrange with you for the onward transmission of the letter he has with him for General Alexander. It is very urgent and very 'hot' and, as there are some remarks in it that could not be seen by others in the War Office, it could not go by signal. I feel sure that you will see that it goes on safely and without delay.

I think you will find Martin the man you want. He is quiet and shy at first, but he really knows his stuff. He was more accurate than some of us about the probable run of events at Dieppe and he has been well in on the experiments with the latest barges and equipment which took place in Scotland.

Let me have him back, please, as soon as the assault is over. He might bring some sardines with him - they are 'on points' here!

Yours sincerely,
Louis Mountbatten

Admiral of the Fleet Sir A.B. Cunningham G.C.B., D.S.O.
Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean
Allied Forces HQ
Algiers

Key characters

FLIGHT LT CHARLES CHOLMONDELEY
Secretary of British intelligence unit the Twenty Committee, Cholmondeley was the man who conceived the idea for Operation Mincemeat.

LT COMMANDER EWEN MONTAGU
Montagu and his top-secret naval-intelligence department Section 17M helped Charles Cholmondeley to develop the logistics of the plan.

CHARLES FRASER-SMITH
A probable inspiration for the character of Q in the 007 films, Fraser-Smith worked for the Ministry of Supply fabricating gadgets for agents operating in occupied Europe.

LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN
Lord Mountbatten was the Chief of Combined Operations during the war. Operation Mincemeat's hoax letters with the proposed campaign plan were addressed to him.

COLONEL JOHNNIE BEVAN
The officer in overall command of wartime deception, Colonel Bevan was the man who kept Prime Minister Winston Churchill informed of Operation Mincemeat's progress.

LT GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD NYE
The Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Nye was responsible for writing the all-important fake letter that was used to misinform the Germans.

In reply quote: S.R. 1989/43
Combined Operations Headquarters
IA Richmond Terrace
Whitehall, S.W.I
22nd April

Dear General,
I am sending you herewith two copies of the pamphlet which has been prepared, describing the activities of my Command; I have also enclosed copies of the photographs which are to be included in the pamphlet. The book has been written by Hilary St George Saunders, the English author of Battle of Britain, Bomber Command and other pamphlets which have had a great success both in this country and in yours.

The edition which is to be published in the States has already enjoyed pre-publication sales of nearly a million and a half, and I understand the American authorities will distribute the book widely throughout the US Army.

I understand from the British Information Service in Washington that they would like a 'message' from you for use in the advertising for the pamphlet, and that they have asked you direct, through Washington, for such a message.

I am sending the proofs by hand of my Staff Officer, Major W Martin of the Royal Marines. I need not say how honoured we shall all be if you will give such a message.

I fully realise what a lot is being asked of you at a time when you are so fully occupied with infinitely more important matters. But I hope you may find a few minutes' time to provide the pamphlet with an expression of your invaluable approval, so that it will be read widely and given every chance to bring its message of co-operation to our two peoples.

We are watching your splendid progress with admiration and pleasure, and all wish we could be with you.

You may speak freely to Major Martin in this as well as any other matters since he has my entire confidence.

Yours sincerely,
Louis Mountbatten

"General Dwight Eisenhower
Allied Forces H.Q.
Algiers

to help Admiral Cunningham with preparations for the next amphibious assault.

The most crucial element of the letter was the last paragraph, clearly indicating that the assault on which Martin would advise was to be on the home of the sardine. Operation Brimstone, therefore, must be aimed at Sardinia. It was, Montagu admitted, a "laboured" witticism. Like many Britons, Montagu found the German sense of humour somewhat leaden. "I thought that that sort of joke would appeal to the Germans."

But would they be taken in? This second letter contained dangerous flaws. It appeared to indicate that Mountbatten knew the contents of Nye's letter, which was unlikely. Would the Chief of Combined Operations have needed to explain why the information was not being sent by cable? The sardines joke smelled fishy. Louis Mountbatten was a member of the royal family: if anyone could get sardines whenever he wanted them, it was surely Lord Louis

Final additions

There was one final letter to add to the cache. This had no military significance and was included to literally make weight. If Martin was carrying only two letters, he would probably have put them in an inside pocket for safety.

But in that case, they might be overlooked by the Spanish or Germans, as had happened with the body of Lt Turner in 1942. "Papers actually on the body would run a risk of never being found due to the Roman Catholic prejudice against tampering with corpses." A briefcase would be harder to miss, but if Martin were to carry a briefcase, he would need something bulkier than a couple of letters to put in it. Hilary Saunders, the House of Commons librarian and the husband of Montagu's colleague Joan Saunders, had just written a pamphlet on the Commandos, a story of derring-do to boost public morale. It was decided that Martin's briefcase would contain proofs of this book, together with another letter from Mountbatten, asking General Eisenhower to write a puff for the US edition.

Both letters were written on the same typewriter, and signed by Mountbatten himself, who was told the letters were needed for a top-secret mission. The only element now missing was the final seal of approval from on high.

At 10.30am on 13 April, the Chiefs of Staff Committee gathered for its 76th meeting. Presided over by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Air Staff, the committee included eight other senior officers from the different services. Item 10 on the agenda was Operation Mincemeat. The letters were approved, and Lt General Sir Hastings "Pug" Ismay was told to inform Johnnie Bevan of the decision, with instructions to make an appointment with the Prime Minister to obtain final approval. Ismay dropped Churchill a note, advising him that "the Chiefs of Staff have approved, subject to your consent, a somewhat startling cover plan in connection with Husky. May the Controlling Officer see you for five minutes within the next day or two, to explain what is proposed?" The note came back with "yes" scrawled in Churchill's hand. "10.15 on Thursday."

Visiting the Prime Minister

Two days later, Bevan found himself sitting on Winston Churchill's bed, and explaining Operation Mincemeat to a Prime Minister wearing his pyjamas and dressing gown, and puffing on a large cigar. Large wine cellars that had once served a stately home opposite St James's Park had been transformed into a fortified network of chambers, tunnels, offices and dormitories known as the Cabinet War Rooms, the operational nerve centre. Above was the Number Ten Annexe, including the private flat where Churchill usually slept. Britain's wartime leader tended to work late, whisky in hand, and rise at a commensurate hour.

Bevan had arrived for the meeting in full uniform, at ten o'clock sharp. "To my surprise, I was ushered into his bedroom in the annexe, where I found him in bed smoking a cigar. He was surrounded with papers, and black and red cabinet boxes." Churchill loved deception plans – the more startling the better – and relished the seamy, glamorous trade of espionage. "In the higher ranges of Secret Service work, the actual facts of many cases were in every respect equal to the most fantastic inventions of romance and melodrama," he wrote after the war.

Bevan handed over a sheet of paper outlining the plan, and Churchill read it through. Bevan felt he had better say something: "Of course, there's a possibility that the Spaniards might find out this dead man was not from a crashed aircraft, but was a gardener in Wales who's killed himself with weedkiller." Bevan had left the details to Montagu and Cholmondeley, and now found himself trying to explain the pathology of chemical poisoning to a Prime Minister in his nightwear. "Weedkiller goes into the lungs and is difficult to diagnose," he bluffed. "Apparently, it would take you three weeks to a month just to find out what it was."

Churchill "took much interest" in the scheme, so much so that Bevan felt obliged to warn him that it could go very wrong. "I pointed out that there was, of course, a chance the plan might miscarry and that we would be found out. Furthermore, that the body might never get washed up or that, if it did, the Spaniards might hand it over to the local British authority without having taken the crucial papers."

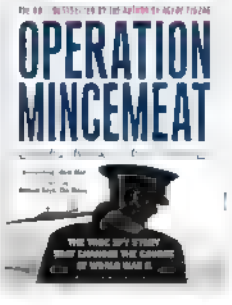
The Prime Minister's response was typically pithy: "In that case, we shall have to get the body back and give it another swim."

Churchill was on board, with one stipulation: before the operation could go ahead, agreement must be obtained from General Eisenhower, whose invasion of Sicily would be profoundly affected by its success or failure. Leaving Churchill to finish his cigar in bed, Bevan returned to the London Controlling Section offices and dashed off a Most Secret Cypher Telegram, under the codename "Chaucer", to Eisenhower at Advance Headquarters in Algiers. The response arrived within hours: "General Eisenhower gives full approval MINCEMEAT."

On 19 April, Operation Mincemeat was set in motion, with HMS Seraph departing for the southern Spanish coast. Arriving there 11 days later, the submarine surfaced at 4.30am, whereupon carefully briefed officers opened the steel canister containing Major Martin and dropped his lifejacket-clad body – with briefcase attached – into the sea. Then, half a mile away, a dinghy was dumped to provide further evidence of an air crash (the canister was later taken further out to sea and rigged with plastic explosives to destroy it). The corpse was found five hours later by a local Spanish fisherman, who turned it over to the British Attaché in Huelva. No sooner had Major Martin been buried than the Admiralty began sending messages to the Attaché emphasising the importance of retrieving the briefcase, stressing that it must not, under any circumstances, end up in German hands. As was hoped, the Germans' most senior Abwehr agent in Spain, Major Karl-Erich Kuhlenthal, got wind of the frantic instruction and persuaded the Spanish to let him view the contents of the case before they returned it. Reading through the documents, they believed they'd struck gold – the German high command was informed of the Allied plan to attack Greece and Sardinia, and Hitler moved quickly to stave off the invasion, deploying some 90,000 troops to the area. The coast was now relatively clear for the Allies to descend on Sicily, and on 9 July 1943, Operation Husky saw them do exactly that. Within six weeks, the island had been seized.

Incredibly, considering the number of things that could've gone wrong, Operation Mincemeat had been a success. Soon after the operation, a telegram was sent to Winston Churchill, at the time paying a visit to the US. It contained just three words: "Mincemeat swallowed whole."

BEVAN FOUND HIMSELF SITTING ON WINSTON CHURCHILL'S BED AND EXPLAINING OPERATION MINCEMEAT TO A PRIME MINISTER WEARING HIS PYJAMAS AND DRESSING GOWN



This feature is an edited extract from the book *Operation Mincemeat* by Ben Macintyre, published in the UK by Bloomsbury. It is available from both high-street and online book stores.

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INSIDE VIEW

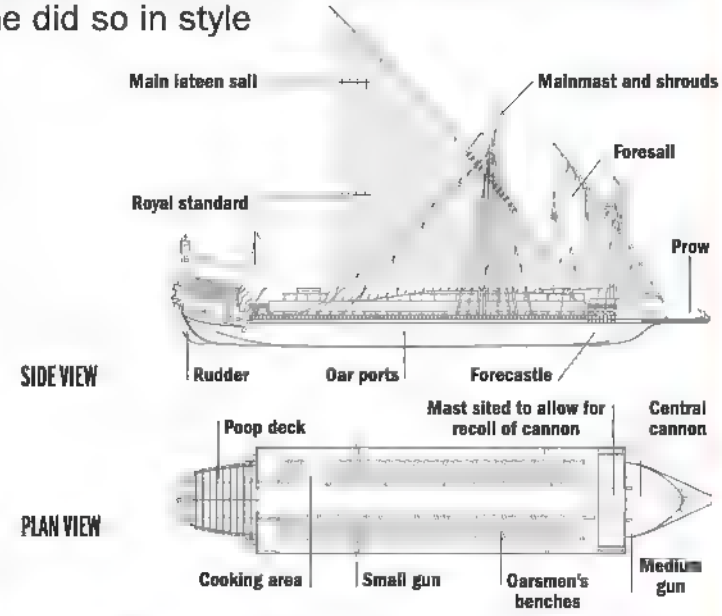
Mediterranean galley

GALERA REAL

Not all battleships are bleak vessels built solely for the purpose of war. When **Don John of Austria** led his Holy League fleet into a victorious conflict with the Ottoman Turks in 1571, he did so in style

The Galera Real was no ordinary war galley but a luxury vessel made for Don John of Austria, Commander of the Holy League fleet that defeated the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The ship carried up to 400 men, of which 236 rowed the galley, with four men per oar. In addition, there were a number of skilled sailors to steer and manage the two lateen sails, as well as a large detachment of soldiers, many of them armed with arquebuses. On the covered forecastle, beneath a raised fighting platform, the galley had a large central cannon and four medium-sized guns. Four small guns were sited among the oarsmen's stations, two on either side of the ship. In preparation for Lepanto, the end of the prow, with its classical figurehead, was cut off so that the central cannon could be angled to shoot down on the Ottoman ships.

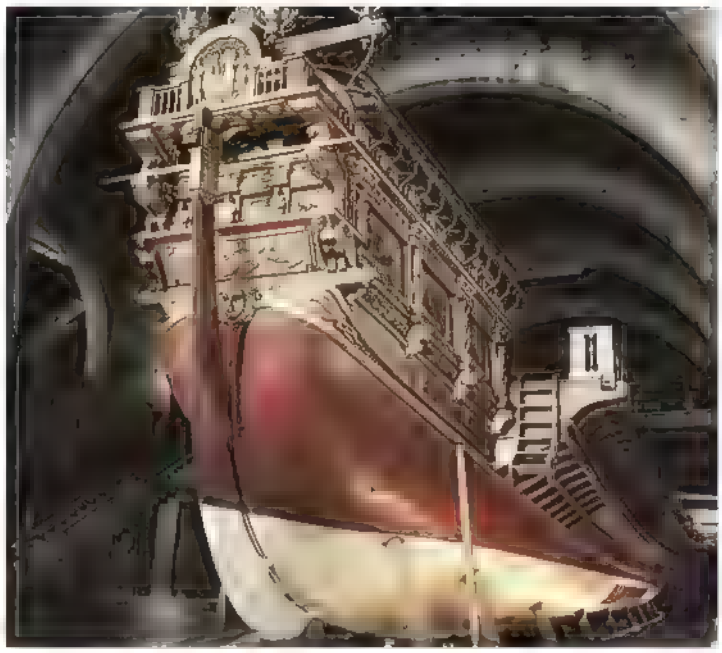
During the battle, the Galera Real was rammed by the Ottoman flagship Sultana, the enemy prow penetrating as far inboard as the innermost oarsman. Turkish soldiers boarded the galley but were driven back. This replica of the Galera Real was built for Barcelona's Maritime Museum to mark the battle's 400th anniversary.



▲ **GALERA REAL** The palatial royal flagship was 60m (197ft) long and 8.2m (20ft) wide. Sails were used on the open sea, but in battle the galley relied on its oarsmen.

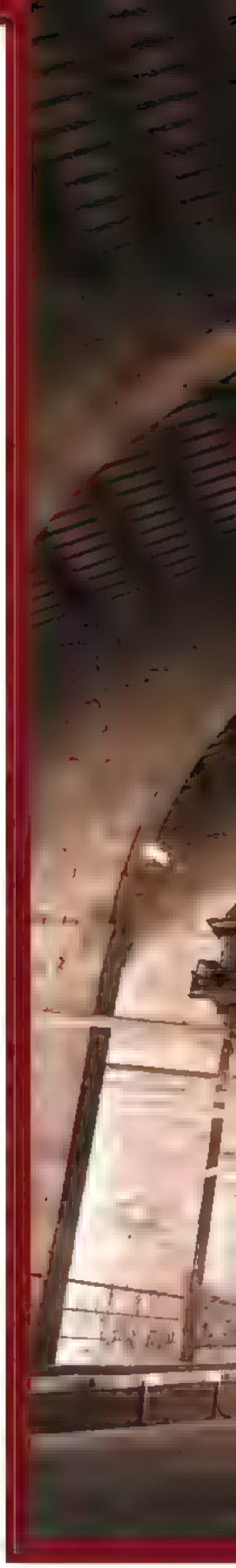
▲ **AUXILIARY GUN** The small, breech-loading guns on either side of the galley could be swivelled on their mountings. They were loaded with small shot and used as anti-personnel weapons against the deck crew of an enemy galley.

▲ **ORNATE SCUPPER** Small ports called scuppers were opened to let water run off the deck.

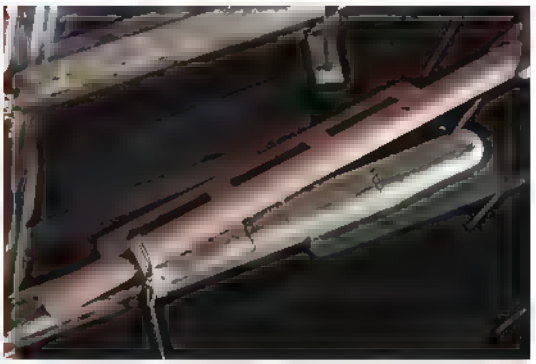


▲ **REAR VIEW** Leading sculptors created the statues and reliefs. Projecting from the deck beyond the stern was an outrigger, which supported the long oars.

◀ **DECK RANGE** One of the luxuries on Don John's galley was a range situated towards the stern. The cooking pots would be suspended over the fire.



▼ **ROWING BENCH AND OAR** The most experienced oarsman took the inner seat and dictated the timing of the strokes to the other three oarsmen, who pulled on the battens bound together.



▲ **THE BINDING OF THE OARS** The beechwood oars were 11.2m (37ft) long. Oars made from a single piece of wood were more likely to break, so they were usually made from two lengths bound together.

▲ **THOLE PIN** Each oar pivoted around a peg called a thole pin as the oarsmen drove its blade into the water. The oar was simply tied to the pin with a loop of rope.

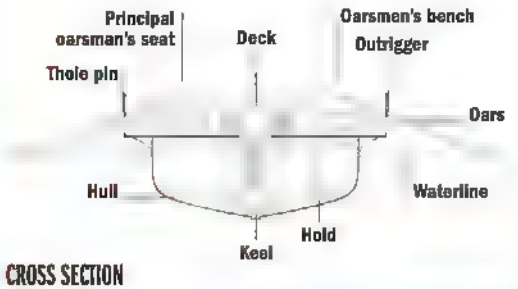
▲ **CLASSICAL FIGUREHEAD** The prow ended in a magnificent figurehead of a gilded Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, who was shown riding on a dolphin and brandishing a trident. The prow of the original ship was removed before the Battle of Lepanto. ▶

▲ **FRONT VIEW** The forecastle that housed the main cannons lay behind the long prow of the ship.

▶ **COAT OF ARMS** The Galera Real was a gift to Don John from King Philip II of Spain, his half-brother. The prow was decorated with the King's coat of arms, supported by two mermen.

STERN, POOP AND HOLD

The ship's most striking feature was undoubtedly its ornate stern, which befitted the son of a Holy Roman Emperor (Charles V) – albeit an illegitimate one. For the replica at Barcelona's Maritime Museum, this feature was painstakingly recreated from a contemporary description. Although the poop deck was elaborately decorated, it would become the centre of resistance if the galley was ever boarded by enemies during battle, with the crew clustering there to defend their flag and Commander. As you might expect from the largest ship of its time, the Galera Real had a larger hold than ordinary war galleys, with plenty of space for storage (see right). This came in useful for conflicts that necessitated spending a considerable amount of time at sea, and gave Don John's fleet something of an advantage over their lesser equipped foes.



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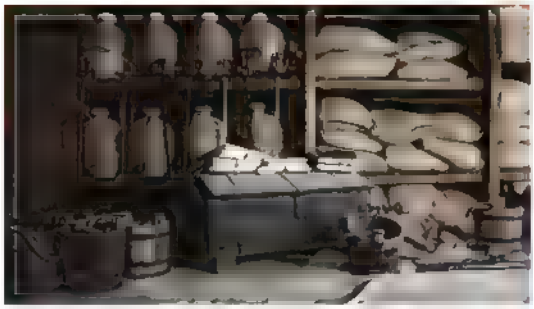


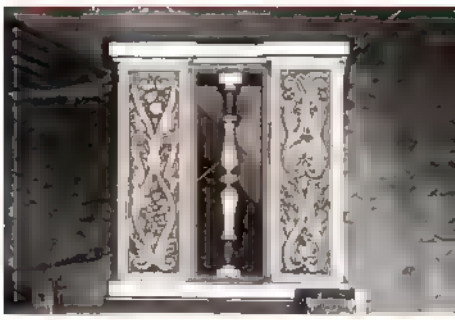
▲ **SPACIOUS HOLD** The hold stored food, drink, weapons, armour, sailcloth, spars, clothing, ropes and a number of lockable chests in which the ship's gentlemen could keep their possessions. There was also a gunpowder room and a surgery.

▲ **BASIC STORES** Grain, wine and water were always in store. Fresh vegetables and bread were taken aboard whenever possible.

▲ **DECORATED STERN** The Galera Real was built in Barcelona in 1568 and decorated in Seville. The frieze at the top of the stern showed Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides. Below, the two lions held the coats of arms of Austria and the Order of the Golden Fleece, while the four female figures represented Christian virtues.

▶ GILDED BALUSTER

Every tiny detail around the stern, where the admiral resided in the poop, was richly carved then gilded or painted.

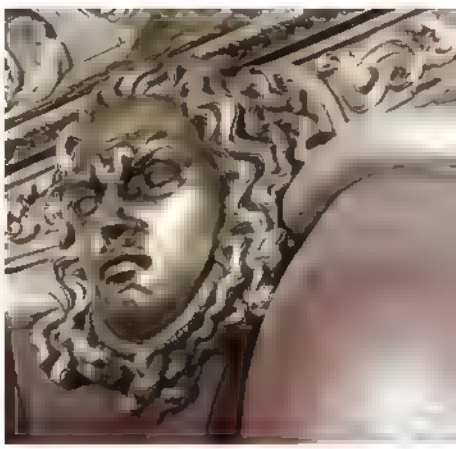


▶ EAGLE

The gilded eagles on the stern were a reference to the Roman Empire and Christian Europe's desire to win back Rome's former lands from Ottoman control.

▶ THE FACE OF MEDUSA

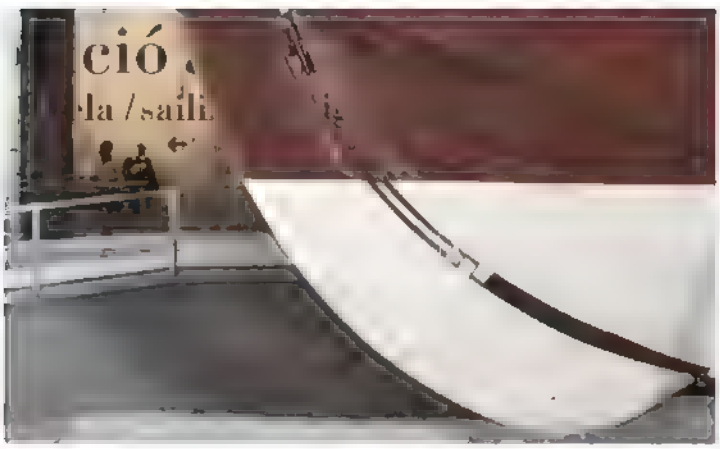
The snake-headed gorgon Medusa stared out from the stern of the Galera Real, deflecting evil and bringing destruction on the ships of Don John's enemies.

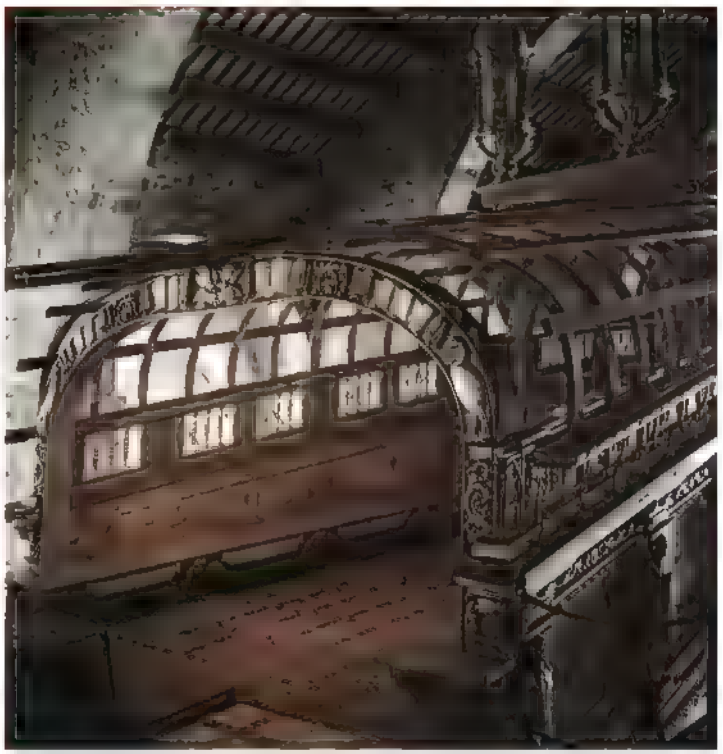


▼ NIGHT LIGHT Above the helmsman's position on the poop deck were three large, ornate lanterns. They were used as beacons for keeping the fleet together at night.

▲ BOARDING STEPS A pair of curved ladders – one on either side of the poop deck – were used for embarking and disembarking the ship.

▲ LATIN MOTTO The rudder's inscription extolled the virtues of prudence and strength – both of which were needed to rule the waves.

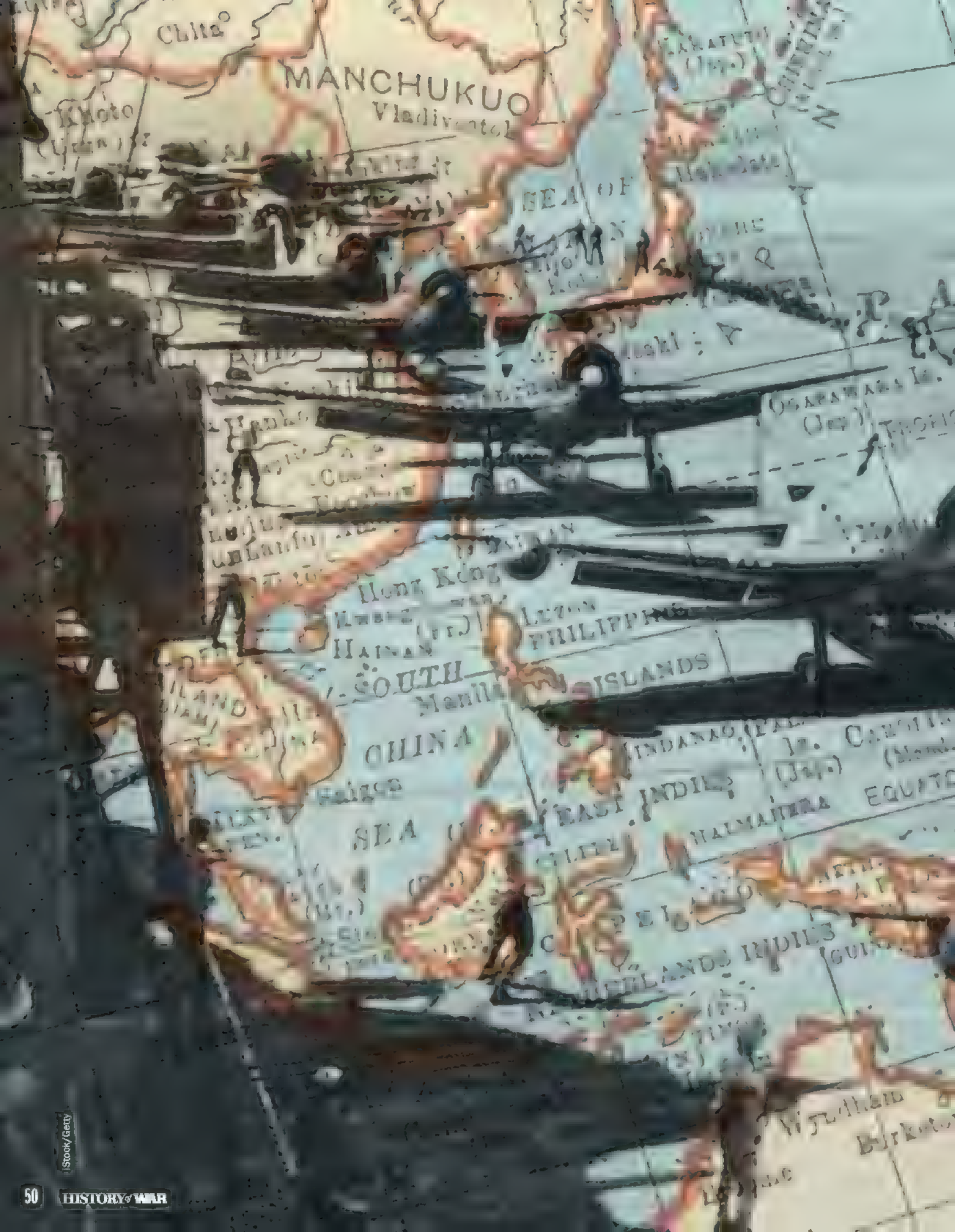




▲ POOP DECOR AND CANOPY The backrests of the poop deck's benches depicted episodes from Greek myths, most of which had a nautical theme and a moral message. An awning was draped over the canopy to keep out the sun, wind and rain, and to give protection in battle.

◀ RUDDER Galley rudders were smaller than those on sailing ships, and curved rather than straight.

This feature is an edited extract from *The Military History Book*, published in the UK by Dorling Kindersley and available from both online and high-street book stores.



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PACIFIC INVASION

Second World War: Having conquered the Pacific, Japan's resources were depleted. So, as Antony Beevor explains in his book *The Second World War*, the Allies regrouped, mounting a mission to liberate the occupied islands and finally defeat the Empire...

Japan had established control of the Pacific with victories in Malaya, Thailand, Burma and the Philippines, but its resources had been left stretched by its exploits as well as international embargoes. President Franklin D Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek met in Cairo on 22 November 1943 and, following the conference, a statement was issued declaring that "Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914, and all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed."

A clash of personalities had contributed to the lack of a coherent strategy in the Pacific, almost entirely due to General Douglas MacArthur's fixation with the Philippines after the Japanese victory there, and his determination to honour his promise "I will return." He insisted on a drive through New Guinea to clear the remaining Japanese forces, then he intended to prepare for the invasion of the Philippines. With his brilliant manipulation of the press, he managed to convince US public opinion that their moral duty before all else was to liberate their semi-colonial ally from Japanese occupation. The US Navy, with a much more practical plan, wanted to advance, island group by island group, towards Japan, cutting off supplies from all its far-flung garrisons and forces of occupation, and creating air bases from which they could bomb Tokyo. Unable to resolve the impasse with MacArthur, the Joint Chiefs of Staff compromised with a "Twin Axis" policy that would follow both courses of action at once. Only the US, with its astonishing output of ships and aircraft, was capable of operating with such a prodigal dispersal of forces

BACKSTORY

1944. Japan has become one of the Axis nations along with Germany and Italy and, after two years of military offensives, now occupies most of the Pacific. But the Allies, initially overcome in the area, have regrouped. Their immediate priority is winning back conquered territory

Furiously defended

After MacArthur landed on Leyte, his 6th Army faced a much harder fight than he had expected. The Japanese reinforced the island and rapidly established air superiority. Halsey's carriers had departed and the ground was too sodden to construct airfields, after 35 inches of rain had fallen. Although the Japanese had intended to reserve their strength for the defence of Luzon, the main island of the Philippines, Imperial General HQ insisted that more reinforcements be sent to Leyte. Aircraft arrived from as far afield as Manchuria but, by then, five US airstrips were in action and William Halsey's fleet carriers had returned

Fighting on Leyte continued into December, partly due to excessive caution displayed by Walter Krueger, who commanded the 6th Army. The fiercest fighting was for "Breakneck Ridge", near Carigara in the north, furiously defended by Japanese troops. Krueger was, however, helped by a disastrous Japanese counter-attack against the airstrips. By the end of December, the Americans estimated that they had killed 60,000 Japanese. Some 3,500 Americans were killed and 12,000 wounded. MacArthur proclaimed it "perhaps the greatest defeat in the annals of the Japanese Army".

The insistence of Imperial General HQ on continuing to reinforce Leyte with troops from Luzon made the Allied invasion of the main island, now planned for 9 January 1945, much easier. But first the island of Mindoro, south of the main bulk of Luzon, had to be taken to create more airfields. The landings and ground operation went well, but the invasion task force suffered heavily from kamikaze attacks. ▶

> AFTER JAPAN HAD CONQUERED THE PHILIPPINES, THE DEFEATED GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR HAD FLED, VOWING, "I SHALL RETURN"

General Yamashita, the Commander on Luzon who had objected in vain to defending Leyte in strength, knew that he could not hope to defeat the forces heading his way. He would withdraw with 152,000 men – the bulk of his troops – to the hills of northern-central Luzon. A force of 30,000 would defend the air bases around Clark Field, while 80,000 in the hills above Manila would deprive the capital of its water supplies.

MacArthur intended to invade the island from the Lingayen Gulf in the north-west, with a subsidiary landing to the south of the capital. This roughly followed the Japanese invasion plan of three years before. During the first week of January, his escorting fleet suffered waves of kamikaze attacks. An escort carrier and a fleet destroyer were sunk, while another carrier, five cruisers, and the battleships USS California and New Mexico were damaged. Many attackers were shot down by anti-aircraft fire, but it was impossible to deal with them all. The landing ships were let off lightly, and the invasion itself was virtually unopposed. Filipino guerrillas had informed the US that there were no Japanese in the area, so there was no need to pummel the sector first, but Rear Admiral Jesse B Oldendorf felt obliged to stick to his orders. Great destruction was wreaked on homes and farms.

While I Corps on the left encountered strong Japanese resistance in the hills, XIV Corps on the right pushed south over flatter country towards Manila. Krueger suspected that MacArthur's pressure on him to advance rapidly was influenced by a desire to be back in Manila by his birthday on 26 January. This was probably unfair on the General. MacArthur wanted to liberate Allied prisoners and seize the port of Manila before the Japanese destroyed it. While a detachment of US Rangers, aided by Filipino guerrillas, freed 486 US prisoners of war from a camp near Cabantuan, MacArthur grew impatient because of the slow progress, caused more by the rivers and rice paddies than by Japanese resistance. He sent the 1st Cavalry Division ahead and, on 4 February, their tanks smashed through the perimeter walls of the Santo Tomás University in Manila, where 4,000 Allied civilians were interned.

Public beheadings

The Philippines, with some 7,000 islands, had offered ideal terrain for guerrilla resistance, and the Filipinos had begun to prepare for their liberation soon after the Japanese occupation began. Partly out of trust in the Americans and partly out of hatred for the Japanese, with their torture and public beheadings, guerrilla groups had formed on most of the islands. A few were led by US officers who had been cut off there in 1942. In the areas where Japanese troops seldom ventured, local groups organised civic life and issued their own currency, which was preferred to the Japanese occupation banknotes, while coastwatchers passed information on Japanese shipping

Japanese revenge was conspicuous after MacArthur's forces landed, especially in the capital. Yamashita had not intended to defend Manila, but Navy Rear Admiral Iwabachi Sanji ordered his men to fight on in the city. The remaining Army units felt obliged to join them, making a force of 19,000 men. As these troops withdrew to the centre, they destroyed bridges and buildings. Fires spread in the poorer areas, where houses were made of wood and bamboo. In the centre, however, most were concrete and could be turned into defensive positions.

MacArthur, who wanted to organise a victory parade, was dismayed by the battle in the city, with more than 700,000 civilians trapped in the war zone. The 1st Cavalry, the 37th Infantry and the 11th Airborne Division became involved in house-to-house fighting, while US engineers used armoured bulldozers to clear roadblocks. The Japanese, knowing they were all going to die, massacred Filipinos and raped the women before killing them. Around 100,000 citizens died in the fighting, which lasted until 3 March.

The most urgent priority for Krueger's troops was to eliminate the Japanese east of Manila, who controlled the city's water supplies. They had constructed caves in the hillsides, and the Americans had to clear them out with phosphorus grenades and flamethrowers.

Even while the fighting continued in Manila, MacArthur launched a drive with Lieutenant General Eichelberger's 8th Army to retake the central and southern islands of the Philippines, secure in the knowledge that the Japanese

could not reinforce them. He regarded this as more urgent than finishing off Yamashita's main force in the hills of northern Luzon, since they could be bottled up and bombarded at leisure. One amphibious attack followed another, all supported by air power. Eichelberger claimed to have conducted 14 major landings and 24 minor ones in just 44 days. In many cases, his troops found that Filipino guerrillas had done their work for them, dealing with the smaller garrisons.

On 28 February, the western island of Palawan was invaded. These forces discovered the charred bodies of 150 US prisoners of war, who had been doused in gasoline and set on fire by their guards in December. On 10 March, they invaded Mindanao, where US Colonel Wendell W Fertig led a large guerrilla force and secured a landing strip. C47 transports touched down before the attack, bringing two companies of the 24th Infantry Division. On Mindanao, the cooperation between US infantry, guerrillas and Marine air support forced the Japanese survivors on its western Zamboanga Peninsula to take to the hills. But the operation to reduce the main eastern mass did not start until 17 April. Once again, Fertig's guerrillas secured an airfield and US troops advanced inland, while a regiment on boats and escorted by subchasers sailed up the Mindanao river, taking Japanese garrisons by surprise. Slowed by the jungle and gorges, where the Japanese had destroyed almost every bridge and mined every approach, the fighting took longer than expected. It did not end until 10 June, a month after the war ended in Europe. Yamashita, in northern Luzon, resisted, prolonging the fighting until the very end. He emerged to give himself up only on 2 September 1945, the day of the official surrender.

In China, the Ichigo Offensive had finished in December 1944. Japanese forces had probed towards Chungking and K'un ming, but their supply lines were vastly over-extended. General Albert Wedemeyer flew in the two US-trained divisions of X Force from Burma to form a defence line, but the Japanese had already begun to withdraw. The two divisions returned to Burma and, at the end of January, finally joined up with Y Force on the Salween. The remaining Japanese retreated to the mountains and the Burma Road was open again. The first convoy of trucks reached K'un ming on 4 February.

Field Marshal William Slim's advance, meanwhile, came to a temporary halt along the River Irrawaddy, after Lieutenant General Kimura Hoyotaro pulled the remnants of the Burma Area Army behind this formidable defensive barrier. Slim made a great show of mounting a major crossing with the XXXIII Corps, having secretly withdrawn his IV Corps on its flank. A dummy HQ remained behind, transmitting messages, while its divisions marched south under radio silence, then crossed the river further down, unopposed, to threaten Kimura's rear. The Japanese had to withdraw and Mandalay was captured on 20 March after a hard battle.

Slim wasted no time in pushing south along the Irrawaddy Valley towards Rangoon. Admiral Louis Mountbatten, meanwhile, organised Operation Dracula, an amphibious and airborne assault using the British XV Corps from the Arakan. The monsoon arrived two weeks early, stopping Slim's forces 65km short of their objective. On 3 May, Rangoon was taken by XV Corps assisted by the Burmese Independent Army, which had changed sides to join the Allies. Kimura's forces had no alternative but to retreat into Thailand. The remnants of the Japanese 28th Army, now cut off behind Allied lines in the Arakan, attempted to break east across the River Sittang. But the British knew of their plans. When the Japanese reached the river, they were ambushed by the 17th Indian Division. Only 6,000 men out of 17,000 survived.

For the Japanese, the Ichigo Offensive had achieved its goals. They had inflicted half a million casualties on the Nationalist armies and forced them to withdraw from eight provinces. Yet it also represented a triumph for the Communists. The Nationalists had lost not only more food-producing areas, but also a large part of their manpower reserve. However much they hated the Japanese, this must have come as a relief to the locals. As General Wedemeyer said, "Conscription comes to the Chinese peasant like famine and flood, only more regularly."

After the Ichigo Offensive had destroyed the 13 US airfields, two new bases were built at Laoho k'ou (300km north-west of Hankow) and Chih kiang (250km west of Heng yang). In April 1945, the Japanese advanced with 60,000 men from the 12th Army and destroyed the airfield at Laoho k'ou, but an attack by their 20th Army on the base at Chih kiang was less successful. Five well-equipped Nationalist Chinese divisions – part of the modernisation plan by General Wedemeyer – with another 15 partly modernised formations were diverted to defend Chih kiang. On 25 April, backed by 200 aircraft, they routed the 50,000-strong Japanese force in the last major engagement of the Sino-Japanese War.

Japanese forces in China and Manchuria had already been reduced by transfers to the Philippines. Then Imperial General HQ felt obliged to divert troops from the China Expeditionary Army to defend Okinawa. The 62nd Division, which took part in the Ichigo Offensive, had already been transferred there to defend Shuri.

THESE FORCES DISCOVERED THE CHARRED BODIES OF 150 US PRISONERS OF WAR, WHO HAD BEEN DOUSED IN GASOLINE AND SET ON FIRE BY THEIR GUARDS

TIMELINE

1943

22 NOVEMBER

At a conference in Cairo, Franklin D Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek resolve to win back the Pacific from Japanese occupation.

1944

15 JUNE

Having already regained the Solomon, Gilbert and Marshall Islands, as well as the Papuan Peninsula of New Guinea, US troops, backed up by a massive fleet of ships, invade Saipan in the Mariana Islands. From here, they will be able to cut off Japanese communications and also be within range of an aerial offensive against Japan using the new B-29 Superfortress bomber.

20 OCTOBER

Under the overall command of General Douglas MacArthur, Walter Krueger's 6th Army lands triumphantly on Leyte in the Philippines. However, the invaders face a much harder battle than they had anticipated, with intense advances by the Japanese.

DECEMBER

Fighting on Leyte continues well into December, with the fiercest exchanges occurring at Breakneck Ridge in the north of the island. By the end of the month, the US estimates the Japanese death toll at 60,000, compared to 3,500 of its own men.

1945

9 JANUARY

Following an aerial bombardment, the 6th Army conducts an amphibious landing on Luzon. Fearing an annihilation, General Tomoyuki Yamashita withdraws 152,000 of his men to the hills.

4 FEBRUARY

US forces descend on Manila – the capital of the Philippines – on the island of Luzon.

19 FEBRUARY

Day of the amphibious landing on Iwo Jima. By the time of the landing, 450 US ships are located off the island and the battle involves almost 70,000 US Marines and several thousand US Navy Seabees, as well as 22,000 Japanese defenders. Nearly 800 Marines make a near-suicidal charge from the beaches onto the island.

20 FEBRUARY

Having secured the southern tip of Iwo Jima, US forces begin the move to take Mount Suribachi on the south side of the island, the centre of Japanese defences. By the end of the day, one third of the island and Motoyama Airfield Number One are controlled by the Marines.

23 FEBRUARY

After three days of intense fighting, Mount Suribachi is taken. The US flag is raised, soon replaced by a second, larger flag so that US forces on the other side of the island can see it. The raising of the flag creates an iconic picture that has been reproduced thousands of times, both in popular media and propaganda material.

25 FEBRUARY

The 3rd Marine Division joins the fighting and begins the mission of securing Airfield Two and the central sector of Iwo Jima. Its troops are faced with impenetrable Japanese defences, though, including interlocking caves, concrete blockhouses and pillboxes.

FEBRUARY – 3 MARCH

The battle develops in Manila, with more than 700,000 citizens trapped in the war zone. By the end of the conflict, 100,000 have been killed. ▶

TIMELINE cont'd

1945

7 MARCH

On Iwo Jima, General Graves Erskine orders the 9th Marine Regiment to attack the Japanese under the cover of darkness, with no preliminary barrage. This proves to be a huge success, with many men taken out whilst still asleep.

8 MARCH

The Japanese launch a counter-attack at night, with a thousand men charging the US lines, causing numerous deaths.

9 MARCH

The 3rd Marine Division reaches Iwo Jima's most north-eastern beach, cutting the enemy defences in two. On this same day, US General Curtis LeMay's 21st Bomber Command launches its first major incendiary attack on Tokyo, sparing neither residential nor industrial zones. More than a quarter of a million buildings go up in flames. More than 83,000 people are killed and another 41,000 are injured.

11 MARCH

The Japanese become trapped in an area around Kitano Point, Iwo Jima's most northerly extremity.

20 MARCH

The Burmese city of Mandalay is captured after a hard battle in which the Japanese are forced to retreat.

26 MARCH

Iwo Jima is officially declared secure.

1 APRIL

Admiral Richmond Turner's fleet of 50,000 men lands on Okinawa and, combined with the 2nd Marine Division, makes a feint assault on the south-eastern tip.

5 APRIL

The two divisions reach General Mitsuru Ushijima's main defence line in the hills and are engaged in a fierce battle.

6-7 APRIL

More than 300 Japanese kamikaze pilots take off, having been ordered to attack US carriers. Combined with these air attacks, the giant battleship Yamato – accompanied by a light cruiser and eight destroyers – is assigned to attack the US fleet off Okinawa. However, it's soon destroyed. Further kamikaze attacks take place on 11 and 15 April, each one successfully hitting US carriers. By the end of the Okinawa campaign, the suicides of 1,465 Japanese pilots have sunk 29 ships, damaged 120, killed 3,048 sailors and wounded 6,035.

14 APRIL

The 29th and 4th Marine Regiments attack the base where Japanese Colonel Takehido Udo is hiding. After a two-day battle and after having suffered heavy casualties, they take Yae-dake. Colonel Udo, however, has slipped through the forest with some of his men to pursue the fight from elsewhere.

3 MAY

Rangoon in Burma is taken by XV Corps, assisted by the Burmese Independent Army, which has changed allegiance and joined the Allies. General Kimura Hoyotaro's forces have no choice but to retreat into Thailand and try breaking out to the east across the River Sittang. However, the British, knowing of their plans, ambush them, allowing only 6,000 out of 17,000 men to escape alive.

22 JUNE

General Ushijima and Lieutenant General Cho, defeated in their bunker, make preparations for ritual suicide by self-disembowelment and beheading by their respectful aides.

2 SEPTEMBER

General Yamashita emerges to give himself up for surrender.

Japan's other priority of joining up with its forces in Indochina had also been achieved. In January 1945, when its divisions from China crossed into Indochina, Japanese senior officers there had been shocked by their condition – they had long hair and beards, their uniforms were in tatters and few retained any badges of rank. They were incorporated into the 38th Army to fight in northern Tonkin against the guerrillas of Ho Chi Minh. Ho Chi Minh's men had assisted the Allies with intelligence and the return of downed air crew, as had Thai groups provided with radios and weapons parachuted in by the SOE (Special Operations Executive) and the OSS (Office of Strategic Services).

On 12 January, Halsey's 3rd Fleet reached Indochinese waters to strike at two Japanese battleship carriers in Camranh Bay. This roving sortie was Halsey's swansong before he handed over command to Admiral Raymond Spruance. The two Japanese warships had left for Singapore after US submarines had sunk their tankers, but aircraft from Halsey's 13 fleet carriers sank a light cruiser, 11 small warships, 13 cargo ships and ten tankers, as well as the French cruiser Lamotte-Picquet. While they were in the area, the Navy flyers shot up airfields around Saigon, destroying Japanese aircraft.

The first information for bombing targets in Japan was provided by Thai diplomats based in Tokyo, who passed it on through the Thai resistance to the OSS. By December 1944, the air bases on Guam, Tinian and Saipan were in operation. Using the great advantages that the Mariana Islands offered over the China airfields, all B29 Superfortress operations were gradually concentrated there under the command of Major General Curtis E LeMay. Yet bomber losses mounted, partly from fighters rising to intercept them from intervening islands, especially Iwo Jima. Japanese Navy fighter pilots at dispersal on Kyushu played bridge as they waited to be scrambled to attack Superfortresses high overhead on their way to Tokyo. Their passion for the game was a bizarre legacy from the days when the Imperial Japanese Navy wanted to ape the Royal Navy. The US command decided to invade Iwo Jima, with its airfield from which Japanese fighters operated against the bombers and the bases on the Marianas. Once seized, it could provide a landing strip for stricken aircraft.

On 9 March, the same day as the Japanese removed the French administration in Indochina, LeMay's 21st Bomber Command launched its first major incendiary attack on Tokyo. The 334 Superfortresses carpet bombed the city, sparing neither residential nor industrial zones. More than a quarter of a million buildings went up in flames. Altogether, 83,000 people died and another 41,000 were severely injured – a far greater toll than when the second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki five months later.

General MacArthur opposed the area bombing of Tokyo, but US hearts had been hardened by the kamikaze campaign against their ships. LeMay, however, did not answer to MacArthur, and his only concession was to drop leaflets warning civilians to leave all towns and cities with any industry. Bizarrely, the USAAF still tried to claim that these incendiary attacks by night constituted "precision" bombing.

Bomber crews in the early part of the campaign had been shaken by their losses, and they started to calculate their odds on surviving a 35-mission tour. But the destruction of aircraft factories and the losses of Japanese fighters, most of which had been diverted to kamikaze attacks against the US Navy, soon meant that they could roam over Japanese air space with comparatively little danger. Iwo Jima, although only 7km long, was revealed by air reconnaissance to be a tough objective. LeMay needed to reassure Admiral Spruance that it was necessary to take it for his bomber offensive against Japan. The large island of Okinawa would be invaded six weeks later.

The Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima were commanded by Lieutenant General Kuribayashi Tadamichi, a sophisticated and intelligent cavalry man. He had no illusions about the final outcome of the battle, but he had prepared his positions to prolong it for as long as possible. Once again, this meant constructing cave and tunnel networks, as well as bunkers made out of a concrete that mixed cement with volcanic shingle. Despite the small size of the island, the tunnels stretched for 25km. Once the small civilian population on the island had been evacuated, reinforcements arrived, bringing Tadamichi's strength to 21,000 soldiers and Marines. His men swore to kill at least ten Americans before being killed themselves.

THE MEN OF THE 37TH DIVISION HAD LONG HAIR AND BEARDS, THEIR UNIFORMS WERE IN TATTERS AND FEW RETAINED ANY BADGES OF RANK

The US air force bombed Iwo Jima from the Marianas for 76 days. Then, at dawn on 16 February, the Japanese saw from their bunkers and caves that the invasion fleet had arrived during the night. The naval task force anchored offshore began to bombard the island. But instead of the ten days that Marine Commanders had requested, Admiral Spruance reduced the softening-up operation to three days. Considering the tonnage of bombs and shells hurled at the island, damage to the defences was minimal. The only exception was when Japanese batteries opened up prematurely at some rocket launching landing craft, which their Commander assumed to be the first wave of the invasion. As soon as they revealed their positions, the battleships' heavy guns traversed onto them. But when the amphibious assault began on 19 February, most of Kuribayashi's artillery was still untouched.

The 4th and 5th Marine Divisions landed in the first wave on the south-eastern shore, and were followed by the 3rd Marine Division. The beaches of volcanic sand were so steep that the heavily laden Marines struggled up them with difficulty. Japanese gunfire intensified, with huge mortars of 320mm dropping their bombs on the landing area. Wounded men brought back to the beach were often killed before they could be evacuated to one of the ships. Bodies were mangled and blown apart in a terrible way.

Part of the 5th Division swung left to attack the dormant volcano of Mount Suribachi at the southern tip. An officer had a flag ready to ▶

Q&A ANTHONY BEEVOR

History Of War speaks to the world-renowned historian and author of *The Second World War*

What was it that first drew you into a career in historical writing?

I was an Army Officer and I had studied military history under Sir John Keegan at Sandhurst. There had been several generations of writers on my mother's side of the family, so when I had to do a very boring job in North Wales after five years in the Army, I decided to give writing a try. It wasn't a quick process, but then careers are impossible to predict. In any case, I was very lucky with the timing. My approach of integrating history from above with history from below seemed to take off when *Stalingrad* was published in 1998.

Your book *The Second World War* is a huge achievement. What were the highs and lows of writing it?

I didn't fully realise until I started writing it how ludicrously ambitious a project it was, and I began to panic. Fortunately, I kept my head – I had no choice – and it soon came together in a far better way than I had dared hope.

"I DIDN'T FULLY REALISE UNTIL I STARTED WRITING [THE SECOND WORLD WAR] HOW LUDICROUSLY AMBITIOUS A PROJECT IT WAS, AND I BEGAN TO PANIC"

Are there specific aspects of the Second World War that interest you more than others?

I suppose they're the areas about which we knew so little when I first studied the subject, such as the Eastern Front between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and more recently the Sino-Japanese War. The point of the book was really to remind people that the Second World War was not a single war, it was an agglomeration of different conflicts. For the Americans, it didn't start until December 1941, but for the Chinese it started in 1937. I don't start the story with the Nazi invasion of Poland, as you might have expected; I begin a month earlier, in August 1939, when the Japanese army in Manchuria clashed with the Red Army on the Mongolian border at the river of Khalkhin Gol.

Can you reveal any projects in historic writing that you're currently working on?

At the moment, I'm working on a book about the Ardennes Offensive of December 1944. It was Hitler's last great gamble. That's due for publication in May or June of 2015.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antony Beevor is a former officer with the 11th Hussars, and spent time serving in both England and Germany. While attending the Royal Military College in Sandhurst, he studied under the renowned historian John Keegan, an experience that inspired him to embark on a career writing history books of his own. His non-fiction works to date include *Berlin: The Downfall 1945*, *D-Day: The Battle For Normandy*, *The Battle For Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* and, probably his best-known work, *Stalingrad*, which scooped several awards including the first Samuel Johnson Prize in 1999. As well as being a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, he has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from both the University of Bath and the University of Kent.

hoist on the summit. The right-hand regiment of the 4th Division moved right to deal with a fortified quarry. It was helped by Sherman tanks that had made it up the steep shelving, but the pitiless fighting still lasted most of the day.

By nightfall, 30,000 Marines had landed, despite the relentless shell and mortar fire. They dug in ready to fight off a counter-attack, but even that was not easy in the soft volcanic ash. But no counter-attack came. Kuribayashi had forbidden them, and especially banzai charges in the open. They would kill more Americans from their defensive positions.

The bombardment had at least knocked out most of the guns at the base of Mount Suribachi, but other positions were untouched, as the 28th Regiment found scaling the hill. "Rock slides were tumbled down on our heads by the Japs," recorded one Marine, "and also as a result of our own naval gunfire. Each pillbox was a separate problem, an intricately designed fortress that had to be smashed into ruins. The walls of many began with concrete blocks, laced with iron rails. Then came ten to 12 feet of rocks, piled with dirt and the dirty ashes of Iwo."

Suribachi had a garrison of 1,200 men in its tunnels and bunkers. Impervious to artillery and bazookas, the bunkers could be dealt with only at close range. Marines used pole or satchel charges, with the cry "Fire in the hole!", or hurled in phosphorus grenades. Flamethrowers were in constant use, but it was a terrifying task for the operator, who became a target for Japanese machine-gunners trying to ignite the tank on his back. At one point, Marines heard Japanese voices and realised the sound was coming up through a fissure in the rock. Barrels of fuel were manhandled up the mountain, then gasoline was poured in and set alight.

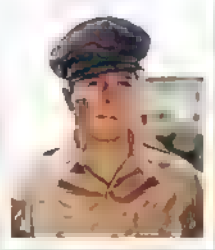
Jubilation and relief

After three days of constant combat, a small group of the 28th made it to the summit of the volcano and raised the Stars and Stripes on a metal pole. The sight was greeted with jubilation and tears of relief, while ships offshore sounded their horns. The Secretary of the Navy, James V Forrestal, turned to Major General Holland

KEY FIGURES

▶ TADAMICHI KURIBAYASHI

The overall Commander of the Japanese garrison during the Battle of Iwo Jima, Kuribayashi knew that he would not be able to beat the US with conventional tactics, so decided on a campaign of attrition. He was killed on 26 March 1945, though his body was never found. Some claim he committed *seppuku* – suicide through disembowelment.



▶ DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

As the US Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, MacArthur played a vital role in defeating the Japanese. In August 1945, he and his staff began the process of rebuilding Japan, charting a new course that would ultimately make it one of the world's leading powers. On 2 September 1945, he accepted Japan's formal surrender.

Smith and said, "The raising of that flag means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years." A larger flag was brought up and raised by six men on a piece of scaffolding acting as a flagpole, and the photograph taken became the icon of the war in the Pacific. Suribachi had cost the lives of 800 Marines, but it was not the main defensive position on the island. Kuribayashi's HQ was deep underground at the north end of Iwo Jima in a complex network of tunnels and excavated caverns. There was fury when the few survivors from Suribachi appeared, having slipped through US lines. Even though they had been ordered by their dying Commander to break out, to take news of Suribachi's fall, they were greeted with horror for having failed to fight to the last. Their officer, a Navy Lieutenant, was insulted as a coward and nearly beheaded. He was already kneeling with his head bowed when the sword was pulled from Captain Inouye Samaji's hands.

By the fourth day, the Marines had secured the two airfields in the centre of the island, but then, with the three divisions in line abreast, they had to advance to take the northern complex buried within the volcanic rock, a truly barren and hellish landscape. Japanese snipers concealed themselves in fissures. Machine guns were switched from cave entrance to cave entrance, and US casualties mounted. Some collapsed from combat stress, but many more displayed unbelievable bravery, continuing to fight when grievously wounded. No fewer than 27 Medals of Honor were awarded for the fighting on Iwo Jima. Hardly any prisoners were taken: even the badly wounded Japanese were killed, since they usually concealed a grenade to destroy themselves and any Navy corpsman who tried to help them. Some Marines decapitated Japanese corpses in order to boil the head and sell the skull when they got back home.

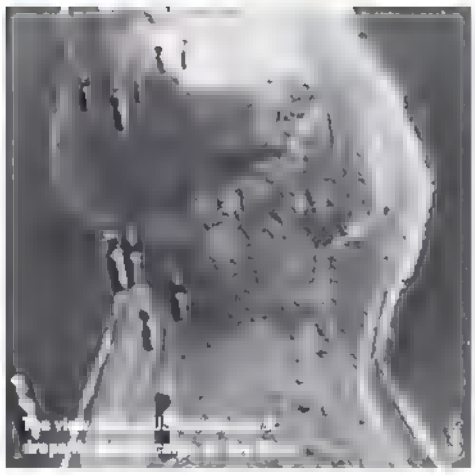
The advance from ravine to ravine and ridge to ridge was slow and horrific. Japanese soldiers, taking the uniforms off dead Marines, slipped through US lines at night to cause mayhem. On the night of 8 March, despite Kuribayashi's orders against any banzai charge, Captain Inouye led one when he and his forces were surrounded near Tachiwa Point. They attacked a battalion of the 23rd Regiment, inflicting nearly 350 casualties, but next morning the surviving Marines counted 784 Japanese bodies.

By 25 March, when the battle for Iwo Jima ended, 6,821 Marines had been killed or mortally wounded, as well as another 19,217 severely wounded. Apart from 54 Japanese soldiers taken prisoner, two of whom committed suicide, Kuribayashi's force of 21,000 men were all dead. After Kuribayashi had received severe wounds in a final battle, he was buried in the caves.

In the middle of March, Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58, with 16 fleet carriers, sailed back into Japanese waters to attack airfields on Kyushu and the main island of Honshu. This was a pre-emptive strike before the invasion of Okinawa. As well as destroying Japanese aircraft, his flyers damaged the battleship Yamato and four carriers. But a surprise attack by a single bomber, which was not a kamikaze, caused devastating damage to the carrier USS Franklin. Although the Captain was given permission to abandon ship, he and the survivors managed to bring the fires below deck under control.

At the end of March, US forces seized two groups of islands to the west of Okinawa, which turned out to be very useful. They found and destroyed a base for suicide boats, prepared with charges to ram US warships. The closest islands also provided good positions for batteries of Long Toms to support the troops once ashore.

JAPANESE SOLDIERS, TAKING THE UNIFORMS OFF DEAD MARINES, SLIPPED THROUGH US LINES AT NIGHT TO CAUSE MAYHEM IN THE REAR



Okinawa, with a civilian population of 450,000, was the main island in the Ryukyu chain. The Japanese had annexed it in 1879 and incorporated it into the home islands. The Okinawans did not embrace the militaristic ethos of the master race. Their conscripts were more buried than any others in the Japanese Army. Okinawa lay 550km to the south-west of Japan and included several towns, including the 15th-century citadel of Shuri in the south. As well as rocky ridges forming a spine across the centre of the island, much of the land was cultivated with canefields and rice paddies. General Ushijima Mitsuru's 32nd Army, at more than 100,000 men, was stronger than US intelligence had estimated, although 20,000 were locally raised militia, despised by Japanese soldiers. Ushijima had lost his best division, the 9th, which had been transferred to the Philippines on the orders of Imperial General HQ. However, he was strong in artillery and heavy mortars. Ushijima, from his HQ in Shuri, planned to defend the southern, most populated quarter of the island to the end. In the northern, hilly areas, which the Americans expected to be the main centre of resistance, he had positioned only a small force under Colonel Udo Takehido. Ushijima did not plan to defend the shoreline. Like Kuribayashi on Iwo Jima, he would wait until the Americans came to him. ▶

▶ TOMOYUKI YAMASHITA
General of the Imperial Japanese Army during the Second World War, Yamashita commanded around 262,000 troops in the Philippines. Between February and March 1945, Japanese troops in Manila killed over 100,000 Filipino civilians. Yamashita was later arrested and found guilty of war crimes. On 23 February 1946, he was hanged.

▶ CHESTER W NIMITZ
Having been made Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Areas in March 1942, Nimitz was elevated to Fleet Admiral in December 1944. He was instrumental in defeating the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Midway in June 1942 and, on 2 September 1945, he acted as US signatory to the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

▶ WILLIAM HALSEY JR
An energetic and aggressive Fleet Admiral, Halsey led the task force that attacked Japanese positions in the Gilbert Islands – his motto, "Hit hard, hit fast, hit often", becoming a byword for the US Navy. A skin condition forced Halsey to miss the Battle of Midway, but his Third Fleet was assigned to cover the landings on Leyte in October 1944.

▶ WALTER KRUEGER
Formerly Commander of IX Corps, Krueger took charge of the Sixth Army after General MacArthur stated that he was "anxious to have Krueger due to my long and intimate association with him". Becoming a General himself in March 1945, Krueger and his army were assigned occupation duty in Japan after the war. He retired in July 1946.

▶ ROBERT L EICHELBERGER
Eichelberger commanded the newly formed Eighth Army during the Pacific campaign. Along with the Sixth Army, his troops enveloped Manila in one of the most significant battles of the conflict. He would later lead his men into campaigns throughout the southern Philippines, which would see them clear Mindoro, Marinduque, Panay, Negros, Cebu and Bohol.

▶ MITSURU USHIJIMA
Along with his second-in-command, the controversial General Isamu Cho, Ushijima was in charge of the 32nd Army, whose task it was to defend the Ryukyu Islands. Overwhelmed by US troops invading Okinawa, the two men retreated to the hills. There, after ignoring a plea by US Commanders to surrender, they committed ritual suicide.

A significant symbolic moment in the Pacific campaign, US Marines raise the Stars and Stripes on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, 23 February 1945.

On 1 April – Easter Sunday – after six days of bombardment by battleships and cruisers, Admiral Richmond Turner's invasion fleet was ready to launch its amtracs and landing craft. After all the horrors of Iwo Jima, the landings proved a mixture of anticlimax and euphoric relief. The 2nd Marine Division made a feint assault on the south-eastern tip, then returned to Saipan. Only 28 men were killed on the first day, out of the 60,000 men from two Marine and two Army divisions that had landed on the west coast. Facing negligible opposition, they advanced inland to secure two airfields. The 1st and the 6th Marine Divisions advanced north-eastwards across the Ishikawa Isthmus into the main part of the island, which Ushijima had defended so lightly. After the relief of landing unopposed, they began to feel tense. "Where are the Nips?" Marines kept wondering. They passed large numbers of terrified Okinawans and directed them back to internment camps set up in the rear. The Marines gave their candy and some rations to the children, who did not show fear like their elders. The Army's 7th and 96th Divisions swung south, not knowing that they were headed for Ushijima's main defence lines across the island in front of Shuri.

Only on 5 April, when the two Army divisions reached the limestone hills with their natural and manmade caves did they understand what a battle awaited them. The caves had once again been linked up with tunnel systems, and the hills were dotted with traditional Okinawan funeral vaults in stone, which made excellent machine-gun nests. Ushijima's artillery batteries were positioned to the rear, with forward observation officers on the hills ready to direct their fire. His main tactic was to separate the US infantry from their tanks, which were attacked by concealed teams who jumped out and ran up to the Shermans with Molotov cocktails and satchel charges. Tank crews who abandoned their blazing vehicles were shot down.

While the two Army divisions were shaken to find what they were up against, Admiral Turner's fleet offshore began to receive the full brunt of Japanese kamikaze attacks launched from Kyushu and Formosa. On 6 and 7 April, 355 kamikaze pilots took off. Although they had been ordered to target carriers, most went for the first ship they saw. With their thin armour and only a few anti-aircraft guns, the fleet stood no chance.

Combined with the air attacks, the most conspicuous suicide mission came in the form of the giant battleship Yamato, accompanied by a light cruiser and eight destroyers. They had sailed from the Inland Sea through the straits between Kyushu and Honshu, and were to attack the US fleet off Okinawa, beach their ships and use them as fixed batteries to support General Ushijima's forces. Many senior naval officers were horrified at this waste of the Yamato, which had received just enough fuel for the one-way trip.

On 7 April, Admiral Mitscher was warned of the Yamato's approach by US submarines. He flew off his aircraft, although he knew that Admiral Spruance wanted his battleships to have the honour of sinking her. Spruance conceded the attack to the Navy flyers. The Japanese suicide squadron was tailed by US reconnaissance aircraft, and they guided the Hell divers and Avenger torpedo bombers towards it.

The first wave scored two hits. The second wave less than an hour later hit the Yamato five times. Another ten bombs struck home as the great battleship slowed and began to settle in the water. The cruiser Yahagi was also stricken. Then the Yamato rolled slowly over and blew up. The Yahagi went down, too, along with four destroyers. The great sortie was one of the most futile gestures in modern warfare, costing the lives of several thousand sailors.

BY THE END OF THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN, THE SUICIDES OF 1,465 PILOTS HAD SUNK 29 SHIPS, DAMAGED 120, KILLED 3,048 SAILORS AND WOUNDED ANOTHER 6,035

The second series of kamikaze attacks on the invasion fleet began on 11 April, and this time they did aim for the carriers. The USS Enterprise was hit by two of them, but survived with heavy damage. The Essex was also hit, but was not put out of action. Next day, the battleship USS Tennessee was hit and a destroyer sunk. The destroyer's crew were machine-gunned by other fighters as they struggled in the sea. A third series of attacks began on 15 April, by which time the stress on naval crews was beginning to tell.

Kamikaze attacks were also made against the Royal Navy's Pacific Fleet, which Admiral Ernest King had been so reluctant to accept in what he regarded as his theatre of war. Task Force 57, as Spruance had designated it, was bombing airfields on the island of Sakishimagunto. The flight decks of British aircraft carriers consisted of three inches of armour plate. When a Zeke kamikaze smashed into the flight deck of HMS Indefatigable and exploded, it simply left a dent. The US Navy liaison officer aboard remarked: "When a kamikaze hits a US carrier, it's six months' repair at Pearl. In a Limey carrier, it's a case of, 'Sweepers, man your brooms.'"

The US Navy paid a heavy toll. By the end of the Okinawa campaign, the suicides of 1,465 pilots had sunk 29 ships, damaged 120, killed 3,048 sailors and wounded another 6,035.

North of Suri, the 7th Infantry Division took seven days to advance 6km. The 96th needed three days to take Cactus Ridge. It then seized Kakazu Ridge in a surprise attack before dawn, but was forced back when the Japanese concentrated all their fire upon it. After nine days of fighting, both divisions were blocked and had lost 2,500 men altogether.

General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr, the Commander of the 10th Army, at least had good news from the Marines advancing north. The 29th Marine Regiment, encountering some Okinawans who spoke English, had discovered where Udo's base was. He had selected a peak called Yaedake, deep in the forest overlooking a river. On 14 April, the 29th and 4th Marine Regiments attacked from opposite sides. After a two-day battle and having suffered heavy casualties, they took Yaedake. Udo, they found, had slipped through them with some of his men to pursue the fight from elsewhere in the forest.

On 19 April, an impatient General Buckner ordered an intense bombardment of the Japanese lines and Shuri citadel, using all the artillery, Navy aircraft and big guns of the fleet, in preparation for a three-division attack.

The assault on the ridges right across the island failed. On 23 April, Admiral Nimitz flew to Okinawa. He was worried by the losses inflicted on his ships offshore and wanted the seizure of Okinawa completed rapidly. It was suggested ▶

to Buckner that another amphibious landing should be made on the south coast by the 2nd Marine Division. Buckner rejected the idea. He feared that the Marines would be trapped in a beach head and it would be hard to supply them. Nimitz did not argue, but made it clear that the conquest of the island must be completed quickly, otherwise Buckner would be replaced.

That night, the Japanese pulled back from their first defence line, covered by a thick mist and bombardment by their own artillery. But the next line on the Urasoe Mura Escarpment, with its cliffs, was not an easy prospect. Replacements being blooded in battle often froze when they saw a Japanese soldier for the first time. Some even shouted for someone else to shoot him, forgetting to use their own weapon. The 307th Regiment of the 77th Division held off a Japanese counter-attack almost entirely with grenades. Men were "tossing grenades as fast as they could pull the pins", a platoon leader said. To keep them supplied, a human chain behind passed fresh crates of them forward.

Feigning death

At the end of the month, Buckner brought the two Marine divisions down from the north of the island. Then, on 3 May, Ushijima made his one great mistake. Persuaded by the advice of his chief of staff, Lieutenant General Cho Isamu, he launched a counter-attack. Cho, responsible for the orders that had led to the massacres and rapes at Nanking in 1937, advocated an attack combined with amphibious landings behind US lines. The boat-loads of soldiers were spotted by US Navy boats, and a massacre ensued at sea and on the beaches. Ushijima was mortified and apologised to the one officer who had opposed the plan.

On 8 May, when news of Germany's surrender reached the 1st Marine Division, the reaction was "So what?" It was another war on another planet, as far as they were concerned. They were tired and filthy, and everything around them stank. "The sewage was appalling," wrote William Manchester, a Sergeant on Okinawa. "It was one vast cesspool."

On 10 May, Buckner ordered a general offensive against the Shuri Line with five divisions. It was a terrible battle. Only a combination of conventional Sherman tanks and those converted to flamethrowers could deal with some of the cave defences. One small hill called Sugar Loaf took the Marines ten days of fighting, and cost them 2,662 casualties. Even some of the toughest Marines faced nervous collapse, mainly due to the accuracy of the Japanese mortar and artillery fire. Everyone suffered from thudding headaches caused by the noise of the guns and explosions. At night, the Japanese would try to infiltrate their lines, so starshells or flares were fired continuously into the sky, lighting up the nightmare terrain with a dead, greenish glow. Sentries needed to note the position of every corpse, because any Japanese soldier creeping forward during the night would freeze and lie still, feigning death.

On 21 May, just as the Americans broke through to an area where they could use their tanks, the rains came, bogging down vehicles and grounding aircraft. For the infantry, carrying ammunition while slipping and sliding in the mud was an utterly exhausting task. Living in foxholes filled with water and with decomposing bodies all around in shellholes was even worse.

Corpses in the open and partially buried were crawling with maggots. Under the cover of the rain, Ushijima's forces began to pull back to final defence positions across the southern tip of Okinawa. Ushijima knew that the Shuri Line could not hold, and with a US tank breakthrough his forces risked encirclement. He left behind a strong rear guard but eventually, a battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment occupied the citadel of Shuri. It found that it had only a Confederate flag with it, so, to the embarrassment of some officers, the Stars and Bars was raised until it could be replaced with the Stars and Stripes.

On 26 May, the clouds parted and aircraft from the carriers spotted vehicles moving south from Shuri. Local Okinawans, terrified by Japanese propaganda about the Americans, insisted on fleeing with the troops, even though Ushijima had directed them to seek shelter in another direction. US Commanders felt compelled to open fire on the column, and the cruiser USS New Orleans began a bombardment of the road with its eight-inch guns. Some 15,000 civilians died along with the retreating soldiers.

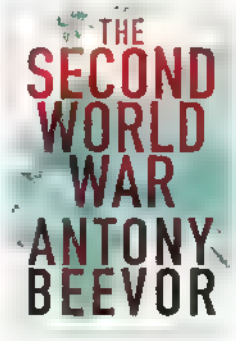
Buried alive

After the withdrawal, Ushijima's force was reduced to fewer than 30,000 men, but hard battles still lay ahead, even if the end was in sight. On 18 June, Buckner himself was killed by shell splinters when watching an attack by the 2nd Marine Division. Four days later, General Ushijima and Lieutenant General Cho, by then besieged in their command bunker, made their preparations for ritual suicide by self-disembowelment and beheading by their aides. The body count of their soldiers came to 107,539, but many others had been buried beforehand or sealed in destroyed caves.

Marine and Army formations had suffered 7,613 killed, 31,807 wounded and 26,211 "other injuries", most of which consisted of psychological breakdown. Some 42,000 Okinawan civilians are said to have died, but the true figure may have been much higher. Apart from those killed by naval gunfire, many were buried alive in caves hit by artillery fire from both sides. In any case, it prompted the question of how many Japanese civilians would die in the invasion of the home islands that was already being planned. The capture of Okinawa may not have hastened the end of the war. Its prime aim was to serve as a base for the invasion of Japan, but the suicidal nature of its defence certainly concentrated minds in Washington on the next steps to consider.

Indeed, the number of casualties suffered by their troops during the Pacific War persuaded Allied leaders that a ground invasion of the Japanese mainland should be avoided. Instead, using captured airfields as a base, they decided to subdue Japan with a concentrated aerial assault on its towns and cities – a strategy that culminated in the US' devastating atomic-bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Japan surrendered just weeks later.

THE GREAT SORTIE WAS ONE OF THE MOST FUTILE GESTURES IN MODERN WARFARE, COSTING THE LIVES OF SEVERAL THOUSAND SAILORS



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Back to the past

DESTINATION WATERLOO

Napoleonic Wars: It was one of the bloodiest encounters in history – and now, as Paul Dimery discovers, you can witness the Battle of Waterloo first-hand on an anniversary tour

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE WAS ONE OF the greatest Generals of his age, a brilliant tactician who modernised the French army and was victorious in numerous military campaigns. So why was he defeated and forced to surrender at the Battle of Waterloo? Perhaps the best way to find out is to visit the site and witness this bloodiest of clashes for yourself. No, we haven't invented a time machine – it's all part of the experience on an organised battlefield tour.

Certain aspects of the Belgian site have changed since 1815, of course. Shortly after the battle, a landscape-altering manmade hill – Lion's Mound – was built to commemorate the spot where Prince William of Orange, later King William II of the Netherlands, was said to have been wounded (the Duke of Wellington, upon visiting the area some years after his victory and seeing the consequences of the Mound, was heard to cry, "They have ruined my battlefield!") And cars and lorries now drive past on the Brussels to Charleroi highway, oblivious to what happened here two centuries ago. But apart from that, the landscape has barely changed, a poignant memorial to the many thousands of men who lost their lives on that fateful June day.

THE LANDSCAPE HAS BARELY CHANGED, A POIGNANT MEMORIAL TO THE THOUSANDS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES

The years leading up to 1815 had been a period of turmoil. With the ambitious Napoleon hellbent on conquering Europe, numerous battles – the Napoleonic Wars – had been fought between his Grande Armée and various European coalitions, the majority won by the French. However, a disastrous excursion into Russia in 1812, where Napoleon's army was left dilapidated by ▶

Visitors pause for a moment's silence as they reflect on the horror and bravery that occurred here two centuries ago

the freezing conditions and enormity of the campaign, followed by defeat in the Peninsular War, where it lost Spain to the Duke of Wellington, enabled the other European nations to grow in confidence. When the Sixth Coalition marched on Paris in 1814, the overwhelmed French Emperor was forced into exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba, and King Louis XVIII – himself exiled during the French Revolution – returned to the throne.

Triumphant return

However, when Louis began to alienate his subjects with his bumbling arrogance, Napoleon made a triumphant return to the French capital and ousted the King. Tensions between the Emperor and the other European nations immediately resumed, and a Seventh Coalition advanced towards Paris in preparation for another coup. Napoleon reasoned that his rebuilt forces – largely made up of veterans, peasants and conscripts – could apprehend the invaders in present-day Belgium, taking them by surprise. However, unusually for a man of Bonaparte's experience and strategic nous, he hadn't reckoned with the military might of his enemy. When his 72,000-strong army arrived at what was to become the field of Waterloo on the morning of 18 June 1815, it was initially greeted by 68,000 of the Duke of Wellington's men, positioned on a ridge just south of Mont Saint Jean. Confident that he could quickly overcome the inferior numbers, he ordered his soldiers to open fire. What he hadn't realised was that a further 50,000 Prussians were on their way to reinforce the Coalition guard. Carnage followed, with a total of 190,000 men engaging in bloody warfare. By the time the French were forced to retreat in the late evening, 52,000 men had been killed or wounded, with 10,000 horses also perishing (a quarter of those deployed).

YOU CAN ALMOST SMELL THE SMOKE FROM THE GRIBEAUVAL CANNONS AS THEY LAUNCH THEIR DEADLY PROJECTILES

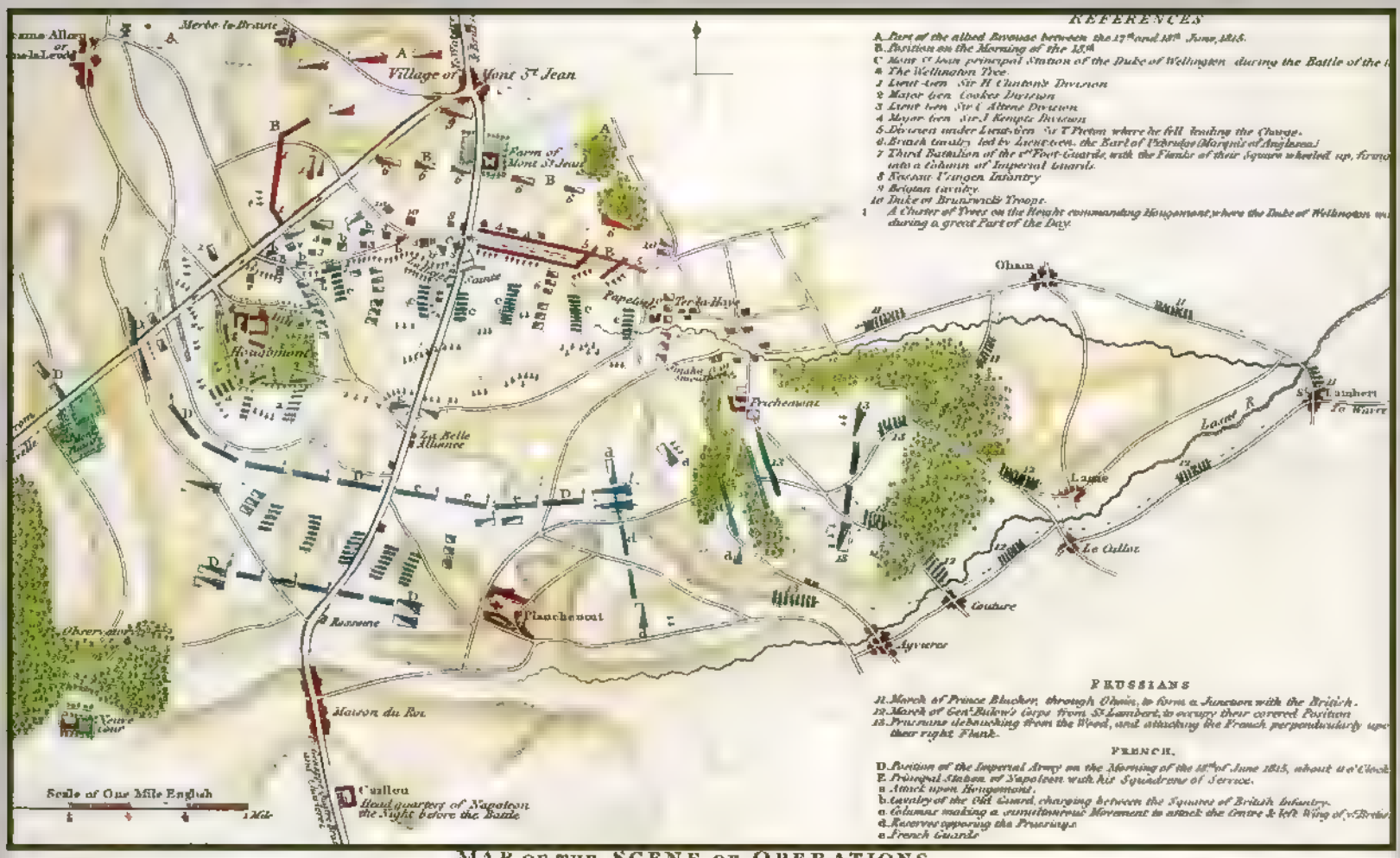
Defeat at Waterloo signalled an end to Napoleon's second reign, which had lasted just 100 days. He was forced into exile for a second time – on this occasion to the island of St Helena, where he died in 1821. Meanwhile, the victorious Duke of Wellington – who later admitted that his triumph at Waterloo had been a "damned near-run thing" – became Commander-in-Chief during the occupation of France, before returning to England in 1818 and later becoming Prime Minister.

Standing atop Lion's Mound nowadays is a poignant and fascinating experience, as it provides a vantage point across the entire Waterloo battlefield. If you close your eyes, you can almost smell the smoke from the Gribeauval cannons as they launch their deadly projectiles at the enemy, and hear the blood-curdling cries of men fiercely engaged in conflict, fighting to the death.

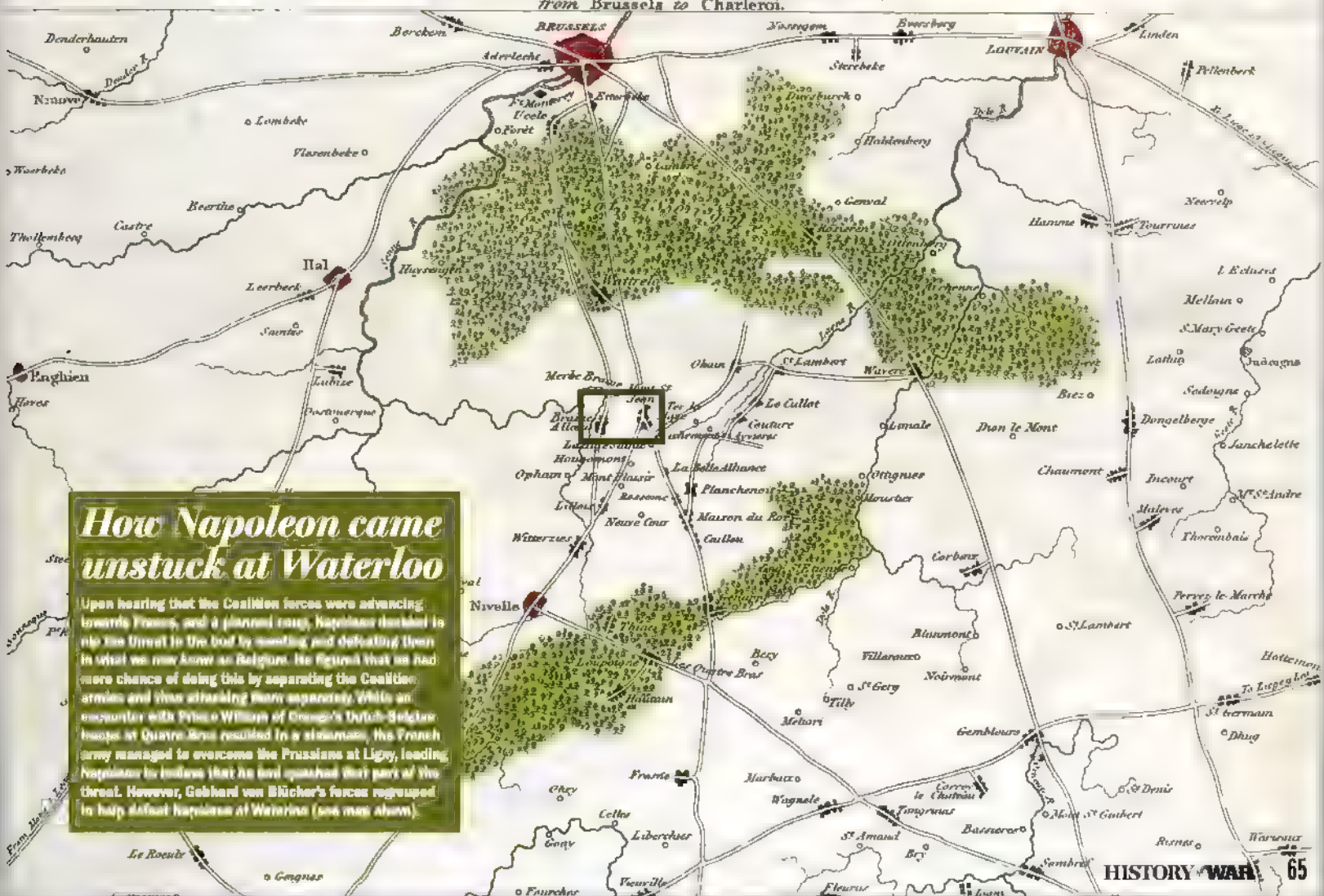
For an even more involving experience, you could book yourself onto one of Leger Holidays' Waterloo Anniversary Re-Enactment Tours and see the battle unfold before your very eyes. In June each year, hundreds of re-enactors (and more likely thousands if you visit the special 200th-anniversary event that's due to take place in 2015) don full Napoleonic garb and perform a thrilling replication of the events of that historic day, complete with all the sights, ▶

The monument atop Lion's Mound

The view from the manmade Mound takes in the entire battlefield



MAP OF THE SCENE OF OPERATIONS, *from Brussels to Charleroi.*



How Napoleon came unstuck at Waterloo

Upon hearing that the Coalition forces were advancing towards France, and a planned coup, Napoleon decided to nip the threat in the bud by meeting and defeating them in what we now know as Belgium. He figured that he had more chance of doing this by separating the Coalition armies and thus attacking them separately. While an encounter with Prince William of Orange's Dutch-Belgian troops at Quatre Bras resulted in a stalemate, the French army managed to overcome the Prussians at Ligny, leading Napoleon to believe that he had squashed that part of the threat. However, Gebhard von Blücher's forces regrouped to help defeat Napoleon at Waterloo (see main album).

sounds and smells of war. As well as the re-enactment, the itinerary takes in excursions to the Lion's Mound Visitors' Centre, the Waterloo Wellington Museum and principal sites on the battlefield, including the myriad memorials to the fallen and the three fortified buildings that remain on Wellington's ridge: Papelotte (now altered from the structure that stood in 1815), La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont.

Memorable tour

Accompanying visitors throughout the tour, primed to inform and educate, are Leger's guides, whose knowledge and expertise on this battle and warfare in general are second to none. "We've been undertaking various versions of Waterloo tours for many years," explains David Warren, a Leger Specialist Battlefield Guide. "We also operate a Walking The Waterloo Battlefields Tour, which incorporates visits to the nearby Waterloo campaign battlefields of Ligny, Quatre-Bras and Wavre, so we have plenty of information and anecdotes about those sites." Last year, Leger also commenced the At War With Wellington – The Peninsular War Tour, which studies the Duke's campaigns in Spain and France between 1809 and 1814.

So what kind of people embark on battlefield visits? The consensus from the guides is that you don't have to be an avid historian or military buff – although, if you fit into that category, there will always be something new for you to learn. On our visit, we saw everyone from pensioners to groups of students soaking up the atmosphere while studying a guide book. "The Waterloo Anniversary Re-Enactment Tour attracts customers from all walks of life and nationalities," Warren tells *History Of War*. "They range from enthusiasts to those with no prior interest in the Napoleonic period. But one thing they all have in common is that they participate in everything on offer to the best of their ability and health, and thus contribute to making a successful and memorable tour."

The many faces of Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon Bonaparte may have been one of the most commanding Generals in military history, but the talents didn't end there. In 1795, aged just 26, he wrote a novel entitled *Clisson et Eugénie*, which told the story of a failed romance between a soldier and his lover – widely acknowledged to be based on his own relationship with Eugénie Désirée Clary. But history suggests that the Emperor was no great lover of women. According to the Napoleonic Code, a French civil system established by the leader in 1804, women were required to be obedient to their husbands, and the Emperor was also known to deliberately spoil the clothing of women he disapproved of, by spilling ink or food on it. For somebody who rarely showed fear in battle, Napoleon's phobias were curious, to say the least: he was said to be afraid of cats and open doors (his visitors were often required to squeeze through a tiny gap). The French leader was also a workaholic who would often sleep for just three or four hours a night. Perhaps tiredness contributed to his defeat at Waterloo.

Memorable is indeed the word, and *History Of War* left Waterloo with a much clearer image of what happened when Napoleon came up against the Seventh Coalition nearly 200 years ago.

VISITORS RANGE FROM ENTHUSIASTS TO THOSE WITH NO PRIOR INTEREST IN THE NAPOLEONIC PERIOD

As the French military maestro himself once said, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

"What makes this particular battlefield tour unique is the commitment of the Belgians to organising an anniversary event that worthily remembers what happened at Waterloo," concludes Warren. "Through the services of Leger, those who wish to attend this historic site are enabled to do so in comfort and assisted by a specialist battlefield guide. Waterloo is truly an experience not to be missed."

Waterloo Anniversary Re-Enactment Tour

The next tour takes place on 20 June, while there will be two tours for the 200th anniversary of Waterloo in 2015. A four-day tour by coach, departing from a choice of 510 regional joining points in the UK, starts at £269* per person.

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Napoleon was overwhelmed by the numbers that confronted him

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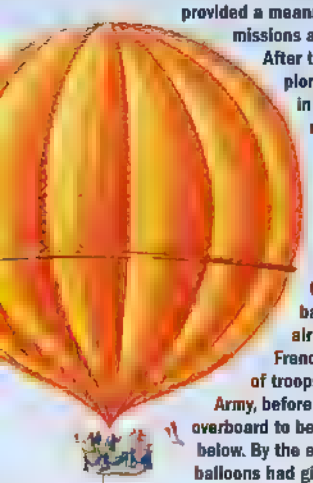
From hot-air balloons to remote-controlled drone bombers, **the advances in military aviation have been astonishing**. We look back at the aircraft that have revolutionised warfare...

1794 BALLOONING

The first mechanisms used in aerial warfare, balloons provided a means to carry out reconnaissance missions and draw up battlefield maps. After the Montgolfier brothers had pioneered manned balloon flight in 1782-1783, the French military developed the idea and, in 1794, a hydrogen-powered airship named L'Entreprenant made its combat debut at the Battle of Fleurus, flown by the Aerostatic Corps (effectively, the world's first air force). The balloon could remain in the air for nine hours, enabling the French crew to record the position of troops from the enemy Coalition Army, before dropping their communiqués overboard to be retrieved by their comrades below. By the end of the 19th Century, balloons had given way to self-propelled airships, and aeroplanes came soon after.

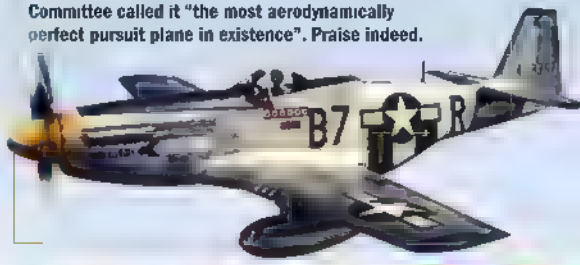


1914 VICKERS FB5 (GUNBUS)

The first aircraft purpose-built for air-to-air combat, the Gunbus was thrust into military service on Christmas Day 1914, when it shot down a German Taube monoplane. Designed by Vickers in England, it had two seats – one for the pilot and one for an observer/gunner – and in its early guises, the pilot sat behind the observer, giving the latter much greater scope for aiming and firing. However, this was changed in later variations. The plane was mounted with a pivot-mounted Lewis gun, but its top speed was a sluggish 70mph and it was withdrawn from service in 1916.

1944 NORTH AMERICAN P-51 MUSTANG

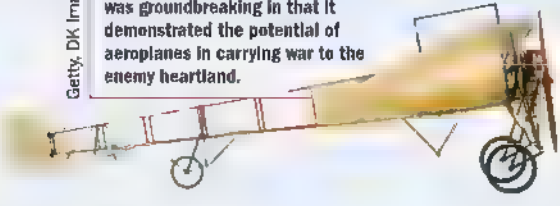
Regarded as America's finest fighter plane during the Second World War, the P-51 Mustang remained in service right up until 1984. Designed by North American Aviation (NAA), it was a long-range, single-seater bomber that proved effective at destroying trains, ships and enemy installations in western Europe, as well as bombing Tokyo from Iwo Jima. With a top speed of 425mph, and armed with machine guns, rail rockets and up to 2,000lb of bombs, the Mustang had a ratio of 19 kills for every plane lost. It is credited with the destruction of 4,950 German planes – more than any other Allied fighter. Such was its success that the Senate War Investigating Committee called it "the most aerodynamically perfect pursuit plane in existence". Praise indeed.



1700 1800 1900 1905 1910 1915 1920 1925 1930 1935 1940 1945 1950

1909 BLÉRIOT XI

Designed by Louis Blériot in collaboration with Raymond Saulnier, the 25hp Blériot XI tractor monoplane was the first powered aircraft to fly across the English Channel – manned by Blériot himself – making its way from Calais to Dover in just over 36 minutes in July 1909. As well as scooping £1,000 from the *London Daily Mail*, Blériot gained celebrity status overnight and within two months had received 103 orders for the plane, which featured a distinctive, uncovered near fuselage. By 1911, more than 500 models had been built. The first instance of an aeroplane used in a military operation, the Blériot XI entered service in Italy and France in 1910, and was deployed by the former in North Africa and Mexico, as well as in the Italo-Turkish War of 1911. However, it wasn't until the First World War that it became a prominent figure in the skies, with British, French and Italian squadrons operating various versions of the aircraft – mainly in observational duties but, in the case of the single-seater models, as light bombers with loads of up to 25kg. While it was, of course, slow by today's standards, the Blériot XI was groundbreaking in that it demonstrated the potential of aeroplanes in carrying war to the enemy heartland.



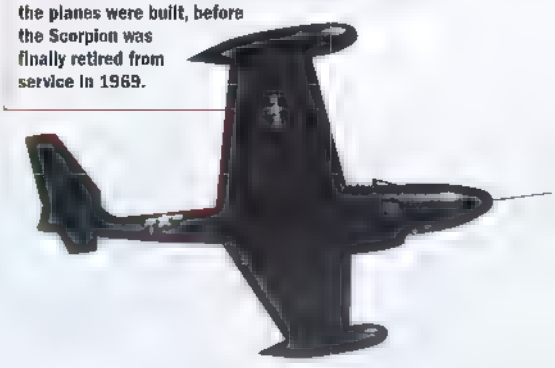
Getty, DK Images

1944 ARADO AR 234 (BLITZ)

The world's first operational jet-powered bomber, the Blitz was brought into German military service in 1944, serving until the end of the Second World War in 1945 (it was, in fact, the last Luftwaffe aircraft to fly over England, in April 1945). With a top speed of 459mph, it was able to easily evade Allied piston-engined fighters, making it a very capable reconnaissance and high-speed bombing platform. Indeed, it was seen as one of Germany's *wunderwaffen*, or "wonder weapons" – a term assigned by the Third Reich propaganda machine to a number of revolutionary machines that it insisted would swing the war in its favour. However, as Allied forces advanced, so German fuel supplies became restricted and factories were ultimately overrun, limiting production to a few hundred by the end of the war. The AR 234's two rear-facing cannons were operated solely by the pilot through periscopes, as the cockpit was directly in front of the fuselage, giving no view to the rear. Only 38 of the aircraft were ever in service and only one still survives today. But for a while, it was a highly respected machine, and the US later based its own jet-powered bombers on the plane.

1950 NORTHROP F-89 SCORPION

Arguably the most capable of the first-generation all-weather jet interceptors, the Scorpion certainly had a potent sting – it was the first US fighter plane capable of launching air-to-air nuclear missiles, the unguided Genie being launched from the F-89J from 1957. While the first model, the F-89A, was completed in 1950, this was primarily used for tests, and it wasn't until the second incarnation, the F-89B, came along in 1951 that the plane entered military service, with the 84th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. Throughout the rest of that decade, the plane – in its various subsequent guises – was used to defend US air space during the Cold War. With a maximum speed of 636mph, it was operated by a pilot in the forward cockpit and a radar operator in the rear, who used a computer system capable of tracking aerial targets up to 50 miles away. In total, 1,050 of the planes were built, before the Scorpion was finally retired from service in 1969.



1955
LOCKHEED MARTIN U-2 (DRAGON LADY)

When the Soviet Union launched its Myasishchev M-4 bomber in 1954, the US had every reason to worry – Moscow now had the potential to attack American soil. In response, President Eisenhower ordered the production of a new high-altitude spy plane that could monitor progress behind the Iron Curtain and beyond. The U-2 – nicknamed the "Dragon Lady" – came into service in 1955 and soon proved its worth, discovering Soviet nuclear missiles on mainland Cuba in 1962. The plane is able to reach an altitude of at least 70,000ft, enabling it to gather intelligence in any weather (the pilot is required to wear a special space-like suit). And during the Cold War, this high altitude brought another benefit: Russia's best fighter jets were not capable of shooting it out of the sky. The U-2 has since been used during Operation Desert Storm in the Gulf War and, despite talk of retiring it from service, is still in operation today. In 1998, it was awarded the Collier Trophy for outstanding aeronautical achievement.

1974
GRUMMAN F-14 TOMCAT

Graceful yet deadly, the F-14 Tomcat is one of the most iconic aircraft in military history. The plane was built in response to the US Navy's need for an aircraft that could defend its carriers against anti-ship missiles launched by Soviet jets and submarines. With its powerful radar and ability to fire missiles from long range, the F-14 was more than up to the task. First deployed by the Navy in 1974 – replacing the F-4 Phantom II – it spent the ensuing 32 years defending American fleets in the theatre of war, as well as carrying out reconnaissance missions. While the plane was retired from US service in 2006 – immediately after one had dropped a bomb over Iraq – it is still used by the Iranian Armed Forces. It features a two-seat cockpit and wings whose sweep varies automatically during flight, allowing for greater wind resistance and therefore better performance (top speed is 1,544mph). Despite its speed, the F-14 is known for its agility – something that was celebrated in the 1986 Tom Cruise film, *Top Gun*.

1989 STEALTH BOMBERS

Stealth aircraft have been in demand since the CIA appealed for a replacement to the Lockheed U-2 spy plane during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. The most famous stealth bomber is the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit (pictured below), which has a radar-absorbent surface and a unique boomerang shape that allows electromagnetic energy to be absorbed, thus making the plane disappear from enemy radar. Classified as a multi-role bomber, used for espionage missions and more traditional bombing campaigns, it is designed to carry conventional bombs as well as nuclear munitions. With a top speed of 627mph, it is able to travel almost 7,000 miles in a single flight, or almost 12,000 miles when refuelled mid-flight. While the US Government has stated that it will not be ordering any more B-2 Spirits, improvements to its 21-strong fleet continue to be made – and a multi-billion-dollar replacement is in the pipeline.

1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2014

1969 HAWKER-SIDDELEY HARRIER

Also known as the Harrier Jump Jet, this British plane became the world's first practical vertical-take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft after the perfection of its vectored-thrust turbofan engine in the late 1960s. It had the ability to take off from the spot in which it was standing – much like a helicopter – and was also able to stop mid-flight and change direction. Its take-off ability eliminated the need for a long runway, making it one of the most practical planes of its generation. The Harrier was, however, regarded as one of the more dangerous aircraft to fly, due to the unique nature of its control system and the level of training required by the pilot. The first-generation Harrier went on to see successful combat action during the Falklands War in 1982, where it carried out more than 2,000 sorties and destroyed 32 enemy aircraft, 23 of them during air-to-air combat. It was retired shortly after but its successor, the Harrier II, took part in both Gulf Wars and the Balkan conflicts, before itself being retired from service in 2011. With a top speed of 730mph, this hovering plane was one of the world's most recognisable aircraft, and remains a credit to British aviation.

1978
MCDONNELL DOUGLAS F/A-18 HORNET

The Hornet was the first tactical plane initially designed to engage in both air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, and could carry a wide range of bombs and missiles to meet those requirements. Although it embarked on its maiden flight in 1978, it was another five years before the plane entered military service, with both the US Marine Corps and Navy. This supersonic jet (top speed 1,190mph) first saw combat action in 1986, when it engaged Libyan air defences during Operation Prairie Fire. During the first Gulf War, the US Navy deployed 106 of the planes, and the Marine Corps 84. In this conflict, the Hornet's dogged durability was demonstrated when one took hits in both engines but still managed to fly 125 miles back to base. It was repaired and flying again within a few days. An advanced, more powerful version of the Hornet, the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, was launched in 1995 and is still in service today (although McDonnell Douglas now goes under the banner of Boeing).

2007 GENERAL ATOMICS MQ-9 REAPER

Released into US military service in 2007, the MQ-9 Reaper is a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) – or drone – designed for long-endurance, medium-altitude surveillance, as well as precision missile attacks. Controlled remotely from bases on the ground, it can reach heights of up to 50,000ft and remain airborne for up to 42 hours (or 14 hours when fully loaded with munitions). Initially designed to play a major role in the West's war on terrorism, it can observe combat terrain using a series of imaging sensors and radars. It also carries a variety of weapons, including laser-guided bombs and air-to-ground missiles – which boast incredible accuracy, even when fired from 50,000ft up. Remote-controlled aircraft have been pivotal in both the Iraq and Afghanistan theatres, as well as in operations by US Customs and Border Protection, leading the US (and other nations) to make huge investments in the continued development of such planes. While there are only nine currently in service, aerial warfare using drone craft is very much a thing of the future.

Leaders of Men

ROMAN GENERALS

The Romans conquered vast acres of land, defeating anyone who dared challenge them. But who were the men behind these seismic campaigns? *History Of War* takes a look...

From the formation of the Roman Republic in 509BC, through the Roman Empire's zenith around 117AD, and even up until the Fall of Rome and the Empire's adoption of Constantinople as its capital in 330AD, war played a key role in Roman expansion across the northern hemisphere. The Romans undertook land-grab on a huge scale, their successes down not only to the political capabilities of their elite, but to their military might and the strategic ability of their Generals. They were responsible for the Republic's and Empire's expansion through war, gradually completing the "Romanisation" of the provinces.

Not everything went smoothly: the Romans fell foul of Germanic tribesmen at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (9AD), where they lost three full legions (an estimated 15-20,000 soldiers gave up their lives during this battle alone). This prompted remorse on the part of Augustus when he heard of the defeat (the Romans never again attempted to push east of the Rhine, save for some retaliatory skirmishes). But there's no denying the vast successes the Romans had in subsuming massive tracts of mainland Europe, Britain, the Middle East and North Africa.

Here, *History Of War* picks ten of the most influential Generals in Roman military history.

250BC 200BC 150BC

250BC 240BC 230BC 220BC 210BC 200BC 190BC 180BC 170BC 160BC 150BC 140BC 130BC

SCIPIO AFRICANUS

GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC

LIVED 236-183BC

SCIPIO'S COMMAND OF THE ROMAN ARMIES IN SPAIN STARTED at an early age – he was just 25 years old when he was commissioned by Rome to defeat the Carthaginians and their leader, Hannibal. At this time, the latter was stationed in Italy, where he had established an almost impenetrable defence, so Scipio attacked Hannibal's base in Spain, despite a previous failed attempt that had seen both of the Roman Commanders in charge killed. Scipio, however, was successful; he captured the Carthaginian headquarters in Cartagena in 209BC and, a year later, captured Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal, by disguising the strength of his forces (hiding heavily armed and armoured troops behind a front screen of light infantry).

Scipio's finest hour, however, came during the Battle of Zama in North Africa in 202BC, where he finally managed to defeat Hannibal himself, forcing his old nemesis' return to Carthage on the edge of Lake Tunis. The Carthaginian Commander used enraged war elephants in an attempt to trample Scipio's marauding troops, but the Roman General simply ordered his men to open ranks, allowing the beasts to stampede through without causing significant casualties. Hannibal was later forced to make a peaceful truce with Rome, bringing an end to the 17 year-long First Punic War.

DID YOU KNOW?

It was Scipio Africanus who adopted the Spanish short, stabbing sword as the weapon of choice for his troops. Its success in close combat resulted in it becoming the standard weapon of the Roman army.

GAIUS MARIUS

GENERAL AND CONSUL OF THE REPUBLIC

LIVED 157-86BC

Marius is attributed with a number of actions that had significant influence on the transformation of the Roman civilisation from Republic to Empire. He allowed non landed Romans to join the army (previously, they'd been required to own property). At the same time, he changed the law so that soldiers had to carry their own equipment (such men became known as "Marius' Mules"). He also held the elected office of Consul an unprecedented seven times from 107BC – though the position became increasingly autocratic, with his "election" more to do with the granting of emergency powers to fight off invading hordes than with the application of the constitution.

Marius also made a name for himself as a General of considerable acumen in several campaigns, especially in Africa and against German tribes. Notoriously, he defeated the Teutones as they advanced into Italy (the tribe had agreed a two-pronged attack on the country with a fellow Germanic tribe, the Cimbri, from their positions in Gaul), ambushing the hordes on the edge of the Alps and killing a reputed 100,000 invaders.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gaius Marius devised the *pilum* – a deadly throwing spear that sheared its blade upon impact – and also introduced the famous silver-eagle emblem as a standard for Rome's legions.

LUCIUS CORNELIUS SULLA

GENERAL AND CONSUL OF THE REPUBLIC, AND DICTATOR OF ROME

LIVED 138-78BC

Despite being born into poverty, Sulla achieved rank within the Roman army and became an essential cog in the winning of the Jugurthine War. Jugurtha, head of the Numidians, had defied Roman decree by dividing up Numidia among his royal family. Rome retaliated, defeating the leader and driving him into exile in Mauretania. Sulla struck a deal with Bocchus, King of Mauretania, that had Jugurtha handed to the Romans, bringing a bloodless end to the war. Sulla was lauded in the Senate. He subsequently fought alongside Marius against the invading Cimbri and Teutone invaders, before taking up political positions – including that of Consul following his efforts as General during the Social War of 91-88BC.

Sulla became the first General to march on Rome, in response to Marius effectively stripping him of his command. Despite several of his Commanders refusing to go with him, he managed to force Marius from the city, though Marius would later return and assume power whilst Sulla was mounting a campaign in Asia. In 82BC, Sulla marched on Rome a second time, his success resulting in the Senate appointing him Dictator, bringing with it near-limitless power

DID YOU KNOW?

Sulla was one of only a few people granted the Grass Crown, the highest Roman military honour, awarded only to those who had saved an entire army in battle. The crown was made from grasses and flowers from the battlefield in question.

100BC 50BC 1AD

120BC 110BC 100BC 90BC 80BC 70BC 60BC 50BC 40BC 30BC 20BC 10BC 1AD

Getty Images

GNAEUS POMPEIUS MAGNUS

POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADER OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

LIVED 106-48BC

Hailing from a wealthy provincial background, Magnus – or "Pompey The Great" – was one of the main leaders during the final decades of the Roman Republic, and Rome's most famous General during its closing. He first entered the political scene by raising troops to help Sulla liberate Rome from the Marians in 83BC. He ping to defeat them, he earned the nickname "teenage butcher". When pirates later began threatening Rome's corn supply in 67BC, Pompey was given command of 120,000 soldiers and 500 ships. Dividing the Mediterranean into 12 zones, he solved the problem within three months.

Pompey later formed the first triumvirate along with Julius Caesar and Crassus, marrying Caesar's daughter, Julia, to cement the alliance. However, when Julia died in 54BC, a chasm was formed between Pompey and Caesar, who found themselves at war. Caesar triumphed and Pompey ultimately fled to Egypt, where he was killed on his arrival

DID YOU KNOW?

When Pompey was killed on arrival in Egypt, he was decapitated and his head returned to Julius Caesar as proof of his death. However, Caesar was angry at Pompey's killers, as he believed it an insult to the greatness of his rival.

GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR

DICTATOR OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

LIVED 100-44BC

Probably the most famous of all the Romans, as a politician Caesar was the first Emperor in all but name. After his conquest of Gaul, which extended Rome's territory to the English Channel and the Rhine, he became the first Roman General to cross both when he built a bridge across the Rhine and conducted the first invasion of Britain.

These achievements granted Caesar unmatched military power, which threatened to overshadow Pompey and his Senate. Pompey accused Caesar of insubordination and treason, and ordered him to disband his army and return to Rome. Caesar refused and, in 49BC, led his army into civil war, in which they triumphed.

As dictator in Rome, Caesar overhauled the calendar, started construction of a basilica and issued a new coinage with his head on it. He was murdered in 44BC, his death precipitating the end of the Roman Republic

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite having a living son with Cleopatra, Caesar adopted a great nephew, Octavian, to take over his legacy. Octavian went on to become Emperor Augustus, the first ruler of the Roman Empire after the fall of the Republic.

MARCUS ANTONIUS

CONSUL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

LIVED 83-30BC

Considered by many to be the greatest Roman General, Antony started his career as an Officer in Egypt. Between 54-50BC, he served under Julius Caesar, becoming one of his most trusted Officers. As a result, upon Caesar's assassination, Antony became Rome's leader, with Caesar's posthumously adopted son, Octavian, as his main rival. The second triumvirate was formed by Antony, Octavian and Lepidus, with Antony taking possession of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, and Octavian most of the west. Tensions were apparent between the two men almost immediately, however

Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia, but later took Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, as his lover and wife. This meant that he lost his alliance with Rome When war broke out between the two men as a result, Antony was defeated, and he and Cleopatra fled to Egypt, where they committed suicide.

DID YOU KNOW?

Antony mistakenly believed that Cleopatra had already killed herself, so he threw himself on his own sword. He was then taken to her and died in her arms. The grieving Cleopatra later committed suicide, reputedly by allowing herself to be bitten by an asp.

100BC 50BC 1AD

100BC 90BC 80BC 70BC 60BC 50BC 40BC 30BC 20BC 10BC 1AD 10AD 20AD

MARCUS VIPSANIUS AGRIPPA

GENERAL AND CONSUL OF THE EMPIRE

LIVED 63-12BC

As well as being Octavian's key military advisor, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa was General of the Roman Empire's fleet of ships and was responsible for the construction of Portus Julius harbour, which joined Lucrinus Lacus and Lake Avernus so that Rome's ships could be effectively defended from Sextus Pompey's fleet. Agrippa and Octavian fought together in many land and sea battles right across the Empire, including Gaul, Germanicus and - probably - Africa, where the former may well have fought against his brother in one of the civil wars (though this has never been substantiated)

Agrippa was as well-known for his civic duties as for his military exploits. He was responsible for co-ordinating repairs and improvements to Rome's water works, renovating and extending the Aqua Marcia aqueduct, and introducing water to new parts of the city. When Augustus came into power, Agrippa worked closely with the Emperor, repairing streets and buildings, and organising festivals for Rome's inhabitants to enjoy. Augustus paid a back-handed compliment to Agrippa when he later said, "I found the city of brick but left it of marble."

DID YOU KNOW?

Following his decisive victories against Sextus Pompey in 36BC, Agrippa was welcomed back to Rome, where he was given a naval crown decorated with the prows of Roman ships. This was a one-off honour never before or since bestowed.

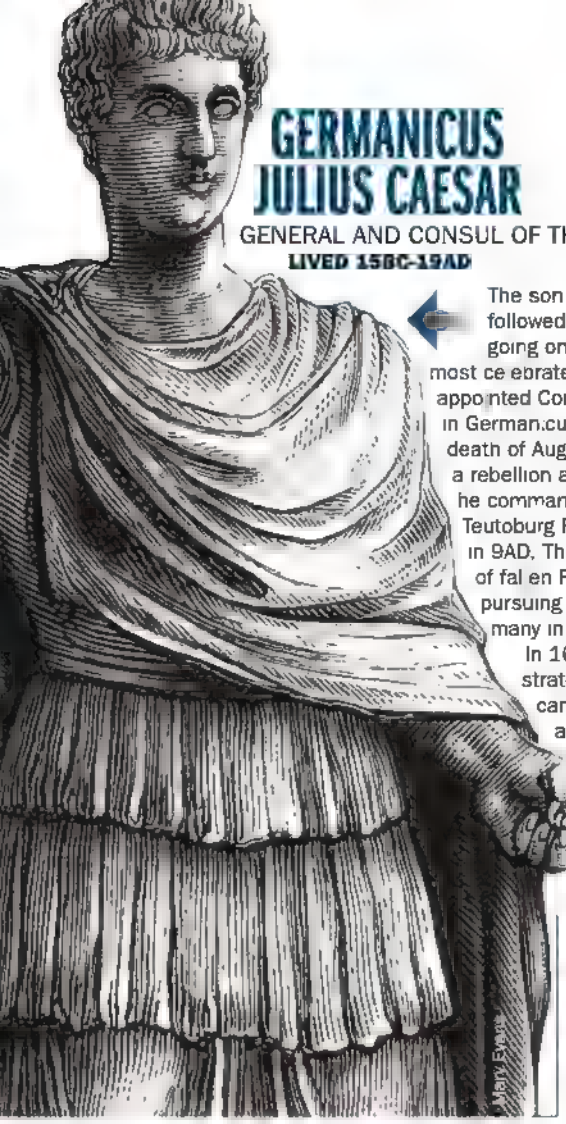
GERMANICUS JULIUS CAESAR

GENERAL AND CONSUL OF THE EMPIRE

LIVED 15BC-19AD

The son of Drusus, Caesar followed in his father's footsteps, going on to become one of Rome's most celebrated Generals. He was appointed Commander of the Forces in Germanicus in 14AD, following the death of Augustus. After quashing a rebellion among the eight legions he commanded, he marched to Teutoburg Forest, scene of a battle in 9AD. There, he buried the bones of fallen Roman soldiers, before pursuing the Cherusci tribe, killing many in an act of vengeance.

In 16AD, he proved his strategic ability again when he came up against a German alliance at the Battle of the Weser River, many thousands of German troops being killed compared to minor Roman losses.



Mary Evans

DID YOU KNOW?

Germanicus died from a mysterious illness in 19AD. Blame lay at the door of Piso, who, it was claimed, poisoned the Commander upon order from Emperor Tiberius. The truth was never arrived at: Piso took his own life during his trial.

GNAEUS JULIUS AGRICOLA

GENERAL OF THE EMPIRE AND GOVERNOR OF BRITAIN

LIVED 40-93AD

Agricola was the General who conquered Britain – and not just parts, but all of it, fighting battles across the country and, as eventual Governor, laying down 1,300 miles of roads and building at least 60 forts.

After holding office in Rome, Agricola was sent by Emperor Vespasian to serve in Britain as a Commander. Later becoming a Governor, he was ordered to conquer the entire island. Leading his army to the north of Scotland, Agricola established forts across much of the lowlands and introduced Romanising measures, encouraging communities to build towns on the Roman model and educating the sons of the native nobility in the Roman manner. He also instructed the prefect of the fleet in the north of Britain to sail around the northern coast, confirming for the first time that Britain was, in fact, an island.

Agricola was recalled from Britain in 85AD, the rumour being that Emperor Domitian was jealous of his successes.

As well as being honoured by the erection of a statue of him in Rome (one of the highest military honours achievable), Agricola had a statue of him erected at the Roman Baths in the British city of Bath. It still stands there today.

50AD 100AD 150AD

30AD 40AD 50AD 60AD 70AD 80AD 90AD 100AD 110AD 120AD 130AD 140AD 150AD

NERO CLAUDIUS DRUSUS

GENERAL OF THE EMPIRE

LIVED 38-9BC

Mary Evans

Rome was robbed of one of its finest Generals when Drusus died a month after falling from his horse whilst attempting to push into Germany. He was just 29. The brother of Tiberius – who went on to become Emperor – Drusus was rumoured to be the son of Emperor Augustus, although officially his father was cited as being Tiberius Claudius Nero. This rumour was encouraged by Drusus, because it placed him in direct lineage to Augustus.

Drusus' military prowess demonstrated itself during his forays into Germany. He was the first Roman General to mount successful campaigns east of the Rhine, pushing his troops as far as the Weser and Elbe rivers. The Sicambri, Batavi, Frisii and Chatti tribes were all subjugated by his army in 11BC. And a year later, he defeated the Mattiaci, Marcomanni and Cherusci tribes. Although elected for Consul, he instead chose to ride out once more for Germany, where he met his maker in 9BC.

DID YOU KNOW?

Drusus married Antonia Minor, daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia Minor, and was reputedly faithful to her until his death. She went on to live for another five decades and never once remarried.

Mary Evans

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PRINTS *in the* TRENCHES

First World War: Amid the terror and tragedy of war-torn Flanders emerged a publication that offered hope and humour to the brave troops on the frontline. Christopher Westhorp tells the triumphant story of *The Wipers Times*

IN MID-FEBRUARY 1916, A MINOR rumble rippling through Ypres in the British-held sector of western Flanders might not have been due to an enemy barrage, but the sound of the first copies of a soldier-produced trench newspaper rolling off the presses. The publication, named *The Wipers Times* (monoglot British soldiers had rechristened Ypres as "Wipers"), was a remarkable feat because the city was at the heart of sustained Anglo-German fighting for the duration of the Great War, and there were significant restrictions in force (as well as limited Y and E letters to typeset the pages). Sometimes – particularly in 1917, when the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) raged – the work took place under incessant artillery bombardment. The wry debut editorial set the tone for what its readers could expect: "Having managed to pick up a printing outfit (slightly soiled) at a reasonable price, we have decided to produce a paper. There is much that we would like to say in it, but the shadow of censorship enveloping us causes us to refer to the war, which we hear is taking place in Europe, in a cautious manner."

Comedic catharsis

The editor was Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) FJ "Fred" Roberts, serving with the 12th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (attached to the 24th Division), and his sub-editor was Lieutenant (later Major) JH "Jack" Pearson. Their hope, they declared, was to publish weekly, "but should our effort come to an untimely end by any adverse criticism or attentions by our local rival, Messrs Hun and Co, we shall consider it an unfriendly act and take steps accordingly". Only four editions were issued under the original title, before it was incorporated into *The "New Church" Times* in April 1916 after the authors' regiment moved to Neuve-Église. Four editions later, the unit moved again and the paper morphed first into *The Kemmel Times* and then into *The Somme Times* (one edition each in July 1916), before becoming *The BEF Times* for 11 editions. The final two papers, issued in November and December 1918, were fittingly titled *The Better Times*. However, all 23 papers are commonly referred to as *The Wipers Times*. (In addition, there were many other sanctioned but less well-known "trench publications" by other units and battalions.)

What Roberts and Pearson were able to satisfy among the men in the trenches who were exposed constantly to the fear of mutilation or death – was the cathartic power of comedy, and especially that which poked fun subversively at the status quo. In so doing, they created a pastiche that drew upon a vibrant British tradition of humorous and satirical literature, which could be traced back to the 1720s with the prints of Hogarth, and later to the political caricatures of Gillray and Cruikshank. Improvements in technology then enabled magazines such as the weekly *Punch* to take off and thrive, popularising the art form and broadening the targets to be satirised.

The paper's audience of fellow combatants was a socially mixed one that was shaped into a community by experiences of endurance in horrific circumstances. Contrary to what many might have supposed, these doughty readers sustained their spirit not with stirring stories of valour by fellow warriors, but with tension-defusing humour in all its forms. The Victorian ideal of the stoic Briton with the stiff upper lip was a real type, and one from which many men did indeed get inspiration. But there was also a typically British counterweight in the form of the belief that no one should ever take themselves too seriously. Pomposity was to be ridiculed. That morale in the British Army generally remained upbeat throughout the war suggests these cultural values proved useful.

Most readers of *Private Eye* and online sources of satire such as The Onion or The Daily Mash would recognise the editorial formula of *The Wipers Times*: a mixture of jokes, regular contributor characters (The Padre), comic journalist pseudonyms (Belary Hel loc), amusing ditties, diaries (one is by Lieutenant Samuel Pepys), columns, spoof adverts ("Also our new combination respirator and mouth organ. The dulcet tones of the mouth organ will brighten even the worst gas attack."), a send-up serial (with Herlock Shomes), humorous correspondence to the editor and limerick-completion competitions.

However, affirming the exclusivity of the readers and their special camaraderie forged in combat, there were lots of in-jokes for the troops (for example, "People we take our hats off to: the person who introduced the order forbidding Company Commanders to go beyond their frontline trench").

Hellish circumstances

At the end, with the war over and victory won, *The Better Times* was more reflective than the mainstream civilian press at home, observing: "One cannot but remark on the absolute apathy with which the end was received over here. England seems to have had a jollification, but here one saw nothing but a disinterested interest in passing events." It continued, "Anyway, though some may be sorry it's over, there is little doubt that the line men are not, as most of us have been cured of any little illusions we may have had about the pomp and glory of war, and know it for the vilest disaster that can befall mankind."

Furthermore, unlike the many memoirs by survivors that appeared after the war, with reflections that benefited from hindsight, the trench journals consist of spontaneous and immediate material. In this sense, *The Wipers Times* preserves the spirit of the frontline, with its jargon and uplifting commitment to a kindly humanity despite the hellish circumstances in which it was produced. Horror is deflected and ultimately defeated with indomitable cheerfulness. A century later, along with remembrance of the sacrifices made by those who took part in the war, it should be a source of pride that such a gallant generation of men never lost their appetite for laughter.

Over the page, *History Of War* presents extracts from the first issue of *The Wipers Times*... ▶

Readers can get a copy of *The Wipers Times* for £7 (RRP £9.99). To order, call 0844 567 8122 and quote reference CH1793. Alternatively, you can order online from www.store.anovabooks.com using the offer code at the checkout. Offer valid until 30 March

Cloth Hall
YPRES.

This Week ▲

THE
THREE DUDS
WORLD'S BEST KNOCKABOUTS

—o—o—o—

BOUNCING BERTHA
THE LITTLE MARVEL,
Only 1½ins. high.

—o—o—o—

THE
JOHNSONS
A Shout. A Scream. A Roar.
This Season the Johnsons' have carried all before them.
ETC., ETC.

—o—o—o—

Entire change of Programme Weekly.

BEST VENTILATED HALL IN THE TOWN.

—o—o—o—

PRICES: 1fr. to 20frs.

MENIN GATE.
CIN'MA
Nightly

◁○▷

GREAT SENSATION THIS WEEK ENTITLED

THE ROAD to RUIN

15,000 Feet Long
EVERY FOOT A THRILL.
People have been so overcome when the final stages are reached as to necessitate help being given to enable them to reach home.
BOOK AT ONCE.

Other Items △

THE RUINED HOME.
—o—o—o—
SOLDIERS AT PLAY.
—o—o—o—
ETC., ETC.

◎ THE ◎
WIPERS TIMES.
OR
SALIENT NEWS.

No 1 Vol 1. Saturday, 12th February, 1916 Price 20 Francs

Editorial.

Having managed to pick up a printing outfit (slightly soiled) at a reasonable price, we have decided to produce a paper. There is much that we would like to say in it, but the shadow of censorship enveloping us causes us to refer to the war, which we hear is taking place in Europe, in a cautious manner. We must apologise to our subscribers for the delay in going to press. This has been due to the fact that we have had many unwelcome visitors near our printing works during the last few days, also to the difficulty of obtaining an overdraft at the local bank. Any little shortcomings in production must be excused on the grounds of inexperience and the fact that pieces of metal of various sizes had punctured our press. We hope to publish the "Times" weekly, but should our effort come to an untimely end by any adverse criticism or attentions by our local rival, Messrs. Hun and Co., we shall consider it an unfriendly act, and take steps accordingly. We take this opportunity of stating that we accept no responsibility for the statements in our advertisements. In conclusion we must thank those outside our salaried staff who have contributed to this, our first issue, and offer our condolences to those who have paid 20 francs for a copy. The latter will at least have the comfort of knowing that proceeds have gone to a worthy cause.

The EDITOR.

The Editor takes no responsibility for the views expressed, or the thirst for information on the part of our subscribers.

The Ration Carriers.

1

On the road from Pop. to Bosinghe
And from Bosinghe down to Ypres,
Where the pavé's rent with Johnson
And the mud's just ankle deep
Where you darsn't light a fag up
'Cos the Boche's eyes are skinned
Ah, that's the place to be boys,
If you want to raise a wind.

—o—

2.

When the road's all blocked with
transport
Taking rations to the dump,
And they're shelling Dawson's Corner
With shrapnel and with crump,
When the word comes down the column,
"A stretcher bearer, quick!"
Then your mouth goes kind of dry boys,
And your stomach's awful sick.

—:o:—

3.

When you hear a sort of whistle
That swells into a roar,
And yer ducks, yer ducks like Hell,
Boys!'
'Cos you've heard that sound before.
There's a crash that echoes skywards,
And a scream of mortal pain.
Then you curse the blasted Kaiser
And just march on again.

—:o:—

4

So you chaps back in [illegible]
Who have'nt got the [illegible]
To go and take the shelling
And to come and do your bit
Just now and then remember
At night [illegible] sleep),
The men who carry rations
On the road from Pop. to Ypres.

D. H. R

Reflections on Being Lost in Ypres at 3 a.m.

I wish I had been more studious as a youth. Then I should not have neglected the subjects I disliked. Then I should not have failed to cultivate the sense of geography. And thus I should not have contrived to lose myself so often in Ypres in the small hours of winter mornings.

Lost in Ypres. It is an eerie experience. Not a soul to be seen not a voice to be heard. Only far out on the road to Hooge, the quick impulsive rattle of the British machine guns answers the slower more calculating throbbing of the Hun variety. If a man would understand what hate means, let him wander along the Menin Road in the evening, and then let him find some poet, or pioneer, or artilleryman to express what he feels concerning the Hun operator in that concrete, machine-gun redoubt

Lost in Ypres at night: in the daytime it is a difficult feat to accomplish Transports and troops pass and re pass along the ruined streets From almost every aspect, through gigantic holes torn in the intervening walls, the rugged spikes of the ruined cathedral town mark the centre of the town. From time to time, too, the heavy thud of a "crump," (like some old and portly body falling through a too frail chair with a crash to the floor), is an unerring guide to the main square

But at night all is different. The town is well-nigh deserted. All its inhabitants, like moles, have come out at dusk and have gone, pioneers and engineers, to their work in the line., Night after night they pass through dangerous ways to more dangerous work. Lightly singing some catchy chorus they move to and fro across the open road, in front of the firing line, or hovering like black ghosts, about the communication trenches, as if there were no such thing as war. The whole scene lights up in quick succession round the semi-circle of the salient as the cold relentless star-shells sail up into the sky. Here and there, a "grouser" airs his views, but receives little sympathy, for the men are bent on their work, and do it with a will.

All this while, however, I have been standing lost in Ypres. I cannot steer by the star-shells, for they seem to be on every side. And at night, too, the jagged spires of the cathedral are redupli-cated by the remains of buildings all over the city. Like the fingers of ghosts they seem to point importunately to heaven, crying for vengeance. It is a city of ghosts the city of the dead. For it and with it the sons of three nations have suffered and died. Yet within that city, not many days ago, a little maid of Flanders was found playing. That is an omen. Ypres has died, but shall live again. Her name in the past was linked with kings, but to morrow she will have a nobler fame. Men will speak of her as the home of the British soldier who lives in her mighty rampart caverns or in the many cellars of her mansions. And even when the busy hum of everyday life shall have resumed its sway in future days, still there will be heard in ghostly echo the muffled fumbling of the transport, and the rhythmic tread of soldiers' feet.

By "The Padre."

◁○▷

EDITOR

SUB-EDITOR

People We Take Our Hats Off To.

—o—

The person who re-introduced the sale of whisky in Pop.

The gallant C.O. who has just got his Brigade.

The officer in charge of the costume department of the Fancies.

The person who introduced the order forbidding Company Commanders to go beyond their front line trench.

The Editor of this earnest periodical. (Thank you SO much. ED.)

Things We Want To Know.

The name of the brunette infantry officer whose man got hold of the carrier pigeons, (sent to this celebrated Company Commander when his communications to the front line had broken down) and cooked them. Also who were his guests?

—o—

The name of the M.O. who attended one of the leading lights of the Fancies, and was overcome by her many charms.

—o—

The celebrated infantry officer who appears daily in the trenches disguised as a Xmas tree.

—o—

Why the dug-out of a certain Big Man is so much affected by subalterns of tender years, and if this has anything to do with the decorations on his walls.

—o—

The weekly wage bill at the Fancies.

R. B.

HISTORY WAR 11

Agony Colnmn.

E J. N. and L. S. P. Meet us at the Clock. Popperinghe Station, at 6 p.m. Wear red carnations, so that we shall know you.—Plymouth.

WILL any patriotic person please lend a yacht and £10,000 to a lover of peace. Size of yacht immaterial.—Address Lonely Soldier, c/o Editor, Wipers.

WILL anyone lend Cat to gentleman impoverished by the war. Rolls Royce preferred.—Address Mishap, P.O., Box 21, Hooge.

FOR SALE, cheap, Desirable Residence. Climate warm, fine view. Splendid links close by, good shooting Terms moderate Owner going abroad.—Apply Ferddup, Gordon Farm, nr Wipers.

DEAREST, I waited two hours on the Menin Road last night but you didn't come. Can it be a puncture that delayed you?—Write c/o this paper.

Occasional Notes.

—:o:—

We regret to report a further rise in property to-day.

—:o:—

The culinary department at the Hotel des Ramparts is temporarily out of action, and the emergency kitchen is in use. This should not deter intending guests from putting up at this fine old hostelry, as the prices are as heretofore, and no new cooks were necessary as a result of the accident.

—:o:—

May we ask how it is that street noises are becoming a bigger nuisance daily Several noted residents have complained that their rest is seriously interfered with We should like to see this nuisance put a stop to immediately.

—:o:—

It has been reported to us that there is a crack visible in the cathedral spire. We should like to start a subscription list to have this repaired. Will some well-wisher head the list?

Poem.

The Night Hawks.

—o—

Talk not to me of vain delights,
Of Regent Street or Piccadilly.
A newer London, rarer sights
I visit nightly willy-nilly

—o—

When daylight wanes and dusk is falling,
We start out clad in gum boots thigh
To wander through the gloom appalling
Through crump holes deep in mud knee-high.

—o—

From Gordon Farm to Oxford Street
(These duck boards are the very devil).
Where strange concussions fill the air.
(I wish they'd keep the—CENSORED—things level).

—o—

Through Oxford Street we gaily slide,
And call at Batt H Q. to see
If there be aught that we can do
For them. (Well, just a spot for me!)

—o—

Then on through Regent Street, and thence
To Zouave Wood, where plain to see
That "Spring is Coming," hence the change
From winter's gloom to verdancy.
(For authority see D R.O.)

—o—

Here Foresters make sightly play,
And in the mud hold revel high.
Recalling fancy stunts performed
At Shoreham, and at Bletchingly.

—o—

Should you but care to journey on
You'll reach, by various tortuous ways,
To Streets named Grafton, Conduit, Bond.
Where memory ever fondly strays.

—o—

And each in some peculiar way
Has charms not easy to define.
So thus the London which we knew
Remembered is along the line.

By A PIONEER.

Correspondence.

—:o:—

To the Editor,
"Wipers Times"

Sir,

As the father of a large family, and having two sons serving in the Tooting Bec Citizens' Brigade, may I draw your attention to the danger from Zeppelins. Cannot our authorities deal with this menace in a more workmanlike way. My boys, who are well versed in military affairs, suggest a high barbed wire entanglement being erected round the British Isles. Surely something can be done:—

PATER FAMILIAS.

—o—

To the Editor.

Sir,

Whilst on my nocturnal rambles along the Menin Road last night, I am prepared to swear that I heard the cuckoo. Surely I am the first to hear it this season. Can any of your readers claim the same distinction?

A LOVER OF NATURE.

—o—

To the Editor.

Sir,

May I draw your attention to the fact that lately the lighting by night in Oxford and Regent Street has been terribly neglected, star-shells being sent up at very irregular intervals. Cannot someone move in the matter?

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

—o—

To the Editor.

Sir,

May I through the medium of your valuable paper call attention to the disgraceful state of repair the roads are getting into. What, what I ask are our city fathers doing to allow such a state of things to come to pass.

Hoping you will give this letter the publicity that I consider it merits.

I am a
WELL WISHER.

Answers to Some of Our Many Correspondents.

—o—

JACK. (Zouave Wood).—No, when on patrol work and you hear the words—"Ach Gott! ich bin ganz fed-up gerworden"—issue from an unknown trench, this does not necessarily signify that you have worked too far over to your left and stumbled into the French lines.

—o—

MOTORIST. (Popperhinghe).—Yes, we have had other complaints of the suspected police trap on the Menin Road, and advise caution on the stretch between "Hell Fire Corner" and the Culvert.

—o—

WIND UP. (Hooge).—Certainly not. "A" Whiz Bang" does not leave the gun *after* it hits your trench, but just before.

—o—

T. T.O. (H 23 B 56).—We sympathise, but when unknown females write to you with requests for photographs, it would be safer to send for references first.

Stop Press News.

As we go to press we hear from our esteemed contemporary the "D.C.C." that a German was seen in I 4 B 2-1 wearing red braces, this is awful.

Addition to "People We Take Our Hats Off To" The R.B.

Our original estimate of day of publication was rather optimistic As a certain liveliness has delayed us, for this and the errors made in our haste we apologise.

Borrowed Plumes.

—:o:—

EXTRACTS FROM OUR ESTEEMED CONTEMPORARY "D.C.C."

—:o:—

1st inst.

No. 7 informs us that a German band was heard playing at about 11-30 a.m. This new terror leaves us cold, as we take it to be only another phase of frightfulness.

—:o:—

The following gem comes from the issue of 28th ult.—

. . . "They climbed into the trench and surprised the sentry, but unfortunately the revolver which was held to his head missed fire. Attempts were made to throttle him quietly, but he succeeded in raising the alarm, and had to be killed." . . .

This we consider real bad luck for the sentry after the previous heroic efforts to keep him alive.

Sporting Notes.

—o—o—o—

We hear that there are one or two greatly fancied candidates for the Spring Handicap, in training way back. We shall get some more information shortly, and will keep our readers posted.

—o—o—o—

The Hooge Course is now in great trim for 'chasing, and this sport promises to be a great success since the new management took it over.

—o—o—o—

There is some good shooting to be had in Railway Wood, but game is getting wilder.

—o—o—o—

The fishing in the Moat and Zillebeke Lake is falling off, as the fish is getting shy.

Golf Notes.

—:o:—

The Sanctuary Wood course was opened on Saturday, under delightful climatic conditions, and before a large and representative throng.

—:o:—

A match had been arranged by the enterprising Committee between the two well known players Tom Sniper, the Wipers professional, and Wilhelm Boschun, that champion of Hollebeke.

—:o:—

The course, which has many natural advantages it has been planned almost entirely on the pot-bunker system so that straight driving and an accurate knowledge of all the hazards one is likely to encounter is essential, and our two experts found trouble rather more frequently than they are wont to do.

—:o:—

The first hole is not particularly interesting, and has no noteworthy feature, being of the ordinary drive and pitch variety, and was halved in 4.

—o—

The second hole, is a short one, bordering Zouave Wood, was also halved, and was noticable only for extraordinary pungent odour which assailed the nostrils near the green, and which affected the putting of both players, as they each took three putts for a short distance.

—o—

The 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th holes were halved again in the proper figures, but at the 6th Tom Sniper was hit by his opponent on the elbow and this seemed to worry him somewhat, and he consequently lost the hole.

—o—

However the Wipers pro got his own back at the 9th. He hit his second—a brainy shot—clean and hard, hitting Boschun in the neck. He claimed the hole in a dignified manner which much impressed his supporters, and the players thus turned all square.

—o—

Going to Culvert the Hollebeke representative was unfortunately stymied by a whizz-bang which cost him the hole.

Both were bunkered in the new breast work in Cambridge Road, and a half in 7 ensued.

—o—

The 12th and 13th were won by Boschun and Sniper respectively through the other finding trouble. The 14th, known as the Fish hook, was won by Boschun through a perfect niblick shot stopping dead. The 15th was halved in par play, but Tom Sniper took the 16th through his opponent topping his second into the stables.

—o—

The 17th saw the end of an exciting match. This hole, known as the Appendix, is a long one shutter, and blind from the tee. Boschun had gone forward to see his line, and Tom played a beauty, which caught Wilhelm full in the mouth and finished him.

—o—

Tom was met with the usual request to stand a bottle for losing out in 1, and this was promptly disposed of in the Club House at Gordon Farm.

THE old firm of NUNTHORPE, COX and Co., are still going strong. Their Splendidly staffed offices in the Ramparts are always open to the public for business. Best odds always on offer. Latest business:

5 to 1 Mist

11 to 2 East Wind or Frost.

8 to 1 Chlorine.

Others at proportionate market prices.

ADVT.

The world wasn't made in a day.
And Eve didn't ride on a 'bus,.
But most of the world's in a sandbag
The rest of it's plastered on us.

OUR NEW SERIAL.

Herlock Shomes at it Again.

SHOT IN THE CULVERT.

CHARACTERS:

BILL BANKS—A Corpse.

LIZZIE JONES—A Questionable. Person Living at Hooge.

HAROLD FITZ GIBBONS—Squire of White Chateau. (in love with Honoria.)

INTHA PINK—A Pioneer (in love with himself).

HONORIA CLARENCEAUX—The Heroine, (is love with Pink).

HERLOCK SHOMES.

DR. HOTSAM, R.A.M.C.

CHAPTER I.

The wind was howling round the rugged spires of the Cloth Hall, and the moon shone down on the carriage bringing the elite of the old town to the festivities arranged to celebrate the 73rd term of office of Jacques Hallaert, the venerable mayor of Typers. Also the same moon shone down on the stalwart form of Intha Pink, the pioneer. He sighed as he passed the brilliantly lighted scene of festivity, thinking of days gone by and all that he had lost. As he plodded his way, clad in gum boots, thigh, pairs one, he soliloquised aloud thus:—"What a blooming game! They gives me a blooming nail, they gives me a blooming 'ammer, and then they tells me to go and build a blooming dug-out." At that moment Intha fell into a crump hole, and then continued his soliloquies thus:

(To be Continued.)

PAGES FROM THE LIVES OF GREAT MEN.

Our NEW COMPETITION

Can YOU read character?
Are YOU a judge of human nature!
YES!! Then YOU take the prizo

Send 5s. to Fritz opposite the Dueks when a handsome nosecap will be sent post free.

TAXIS! TAXIS! TAXIS!

OUR new consignment of highly decorated cars are now placed at the convenience of the public. These are handsomely appointed throughout and can be easily known by the Red Cross painted on each side. Whistle three times or ring up.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: „Ripped, Wipers.. TELEPHONE, 1. Central.

WHY PUT UP WITH THE OLD HAT?

A new consignment of HATS just arrived from England Buy one now and be the perfect little gentleman. Red or Brass bound at proportionately higher prices.

Apply S. TAPP & Co., RUE DE LILLE

NOW THE WINTER NIGHTS ARE WITH US NO BETTER TONIC CAN BE HAD THAN

RHUMATOGEN

Cures FLATUANCE. COLD FEET. ETC., ETC.

CAN BE TAKEN WITH TEA OR SIMILAR BEVERAGE. OBTAINABLE FROM ALL Q. M. STORES.

BUILDING LAND FOR SALE.

BUILD THAT HOUSE ON HILL 60.

BRIGHT—BREEZY—INVIGORATING

COMMANDS AN EXCELLENT VIEW OF HISTORIC TOWN OF YPRES.

FOR PARTICLARS OF SALE APPLY:—

BOSCH & CO MENIN.

On February 30th,

Sale

Sale

Sale

A Large Quantity of SECOND-HAND FURNITURE SLIGHTLY DAMAGED. HARDWARE.

Tell your friends about it.

9, RUE D'MENIN. Telephone: 14, RUINS.

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TRIGGER POINT

THE START OF THE GULF WAR

Summer 1990... With the Cold War a thing of the past, the world was embracing an optimistic new dawn. But in the Middle East, tensions were stirring and a full-scale military conflict was about to erupt. **Paul Dimery** investigates...

NOBODY WHO SAW THAT EERIE green footage will ever forget it. It was February 1991 and millions around the world sat at home, glued to the drama unfolding on their TV screens. An onslaught of bombs rained down on Baghdad from the night sky, the devastating display of pyrotechnics made visible by thermal imaging. As each missile found and obliterated its target, an American voice could be heard uttering the immortal words: "Holy cow!" The ratings went through the roof - but this was no fictional TV series, this was a CNN news bulletin; death and destruction being played out in front of our very eyes. Real war, beamed into our living rooms for the first time.

If the first Gulf War's unprecedented media coverage lives long in the memory, the same can't be said for the reasons the conflict started in the first place. Indeed, for many of us, it began with images of Iraqi tanks ploughing undeterred into Kuwait in August 1990, seemingly an act of unprovoked aggression by President Saddam Hussein. But, while there's some truth in that assumption, there is, of course, much more to the story.

Only two years before, Iraq had come out of an eight-year war against Islamic fundamentalism in Iran – a conflict that had crippled its economy (within the first few days of the war alone, many of Iraq's oil-producing facilities had been destroyed or damaged, leading to an average drop in productivity of 9.7 per cent a year. And then there was the exorbitant cost of the war itself). With much of his country now in the grip of poverty, and having been the subject of four assassination attempts by his own people, Saddam needed to act quickly.

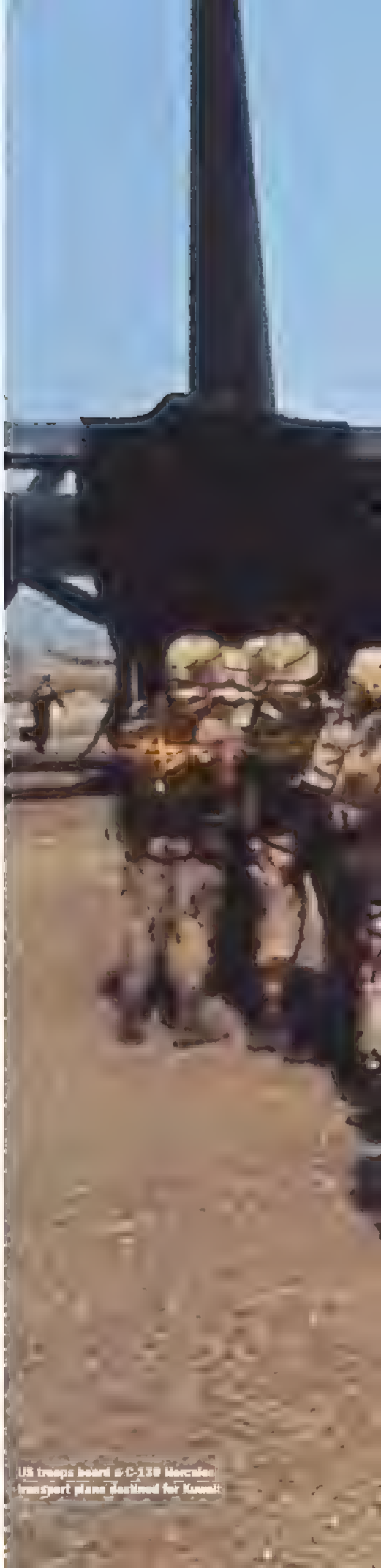
Since oil was Iraq's main source of income, his first tactic was to suggest that OPEC (the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Iraq is a member) restrict the supply to western countries, thus increasing demand and pushing up prices. However, while there was some agreement from Iraq's neighbours with regard to this policy, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates failed to comply and continued to sell oil cheaply. (At the time, the two nations had considerable interests in the west, so it suited them to keep prices down.)

It was this latter point that influenced Saddam's second tactic: he insisted that Iraq's wartime debts be suspended, claiming that the money Kuwait had loaned them came from profits made from this over-production of oil. His plea fell on deaf ears.

SADDAM BEGAN THROWING ACCUSATIONS AT HIS NEIGHBOUR

Running out of ideas, and convinced that Kuwait's refusal to budge was a threat to his country's prosperity (and his own welfare), in July 1990 Saddam began throwing direct accusations at his neighbour. First, he claimed that Kuwait had stolen around $2billion of oil from Iraq's Rumaila oilfield (near the border between the two countries). Then he alleged that it had harboured a secret agenda to acquire Iraqi territory while the latter was at war with Iran.

At breaking point, the Iraqi leader ordered his army to advance towards Kuwait, with just under 40,000 soldiers from his Republican Guard positioned along the border by 19 July (this number later grew to 100,000). While Saddam gave reassurances to The Arab League (represented by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak) that his forces wouldn't actually invade Kuwait, and that he was willing to begin face-to-face negotiations with them at a summit in Saudi Arabia on 31 July, the move was of ▶



US troops board a C-130 Hercules transport plane destined for Kuwait

Mary Evans

OPPOSING FORCES

AIRPOWER

COALITION **IRAQ**

In total, 2,600 coalition aircraft were used in the war. Making its combat debut was the now-iconic Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk, a twin-engined stealth plane. Stalwarts such as the B-52 bomber, the F-14 Tomcat and the Royal Air Force's Tornado continued to excel, while the AH-1 Cobra helicopter – a veteran of the Vietnam War – was deployed in both the first Gulf War and the US's invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Saddam had around 750 aircraft at his disposal at the beginning of the war. These consisted of over 600 combat planes – primarily Soviet MiGs, but also the French Dassault Mirage F1 and the Sukhoi Su – and 160 helicopters that included the Soviet Mil Mi-8. By the time the ceasefire came into effect on 3 March 1991, nearly 350 of the aircraft had been either destroyed or driven into exile.

TROOPS

COALITION **IRAQ**

A total of 697,000 Allied troops fought in the conflict. More than 500,000 of these were American, including almost 40,000 women – the largest deployment of women in US military history. Weaponry included the M16 assault rifle and the Barrett M82 anti-material rifle.

The Iraqi army comprised more than 950,000 troops, 545,000 of which were said to be stationed in Kuwait after the invasion. Many of these were young conscripts who were poorly trained and equipped. Their weaponry included the Soviet AK-47 assault rifle, PK machine gun and Dragunov sniper rifle.

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Saddam's forces were backed up by between 2,200 and 2,600 tanks, including the Soviet T-72 and its Iraqi-built derivative, The Lion Of Babylon. These were supported by some 3,700 armoured vehicles. However, the Iraqi vehicles were inferior in quality to the coalition's and Saddam's troops were not fully trained in operating them. Furthermore, they rarely made efforts to repair the tanks in-field, often abandoning them.

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During the conflict, 297 Tomahawk missiles – costing $3million each – were fired at surface-to-air missile sites, command-and-control centres and power facilities. They were even credited with destroying Iraq's Presidential Palace. At 20 feet long, the missile contains Depleted Uranium (DU) in its tip to provide weight and stability.

Iraq launched SCUDs (tactical ballistic missiles developed by the Soviet Union) at Israel and Saudi Arabia after the coalition's air strikes began. Designed to be launched from the ground to hit other ground targets, their technology was outdated as they were not always guided by lasers and had poor accuracy.

TRIGGER POINT

THE START OF THE GULF WAR

Summer 1990... With the Cold War a thing of the past, the world was embracing an optimistic new dawn. But in the Middle East, tensions were stirring and a full-scale military conflict was about to erupt. **Paul Dimery** investigates...

NOBODY WHO SAW THAT EERIE green footage will ever forget it. It was February 1991 and millions around the world sat at home, glued to the drama unfolding on their TV screens. An onslaught of bombs rained down on Baghdad from the night sky, the devastating display of pyrotechnics made visible by thermal imaging. As each missile found and obliterated its target, an American voice could be heard uttering the immortal words: "Holy cow!" The ratings went through the roof – but this was no fictional TV series, this was a CNN news bulletin; death and destruction being played out in front of our very eyes. Real war, beamed into our living rooms for the first time.

If the first Gulf War's unprecedented media coverage lives long in the memory, the same can't be said for the reasons the conflict started in the first place. Indeed, for many of us, it began with images of Iraqi tanks ploughing undeterred into Kuwait in August 1990, seemingly an act of unprovoked aggression by President Saddam Hussein. But, while there's some truth in that assumption, there is, of course, much more to the story.

Only two years before, Iraq had come out of an eight year war against Islamic fundamentalism in Iran – a conflict that had crippled its economy (within the first few days of the war alone, many of Iraq's oil-producing facilities had been destroyed or damaged, leading to an average drop in productivity of 9.7 per cent a year. And then there was the exorbitant cost of the war itself). With much of his country now in the grip of poverty, and having been the subject of four assassination attempts by his own people, Saddam needed to act quickly.

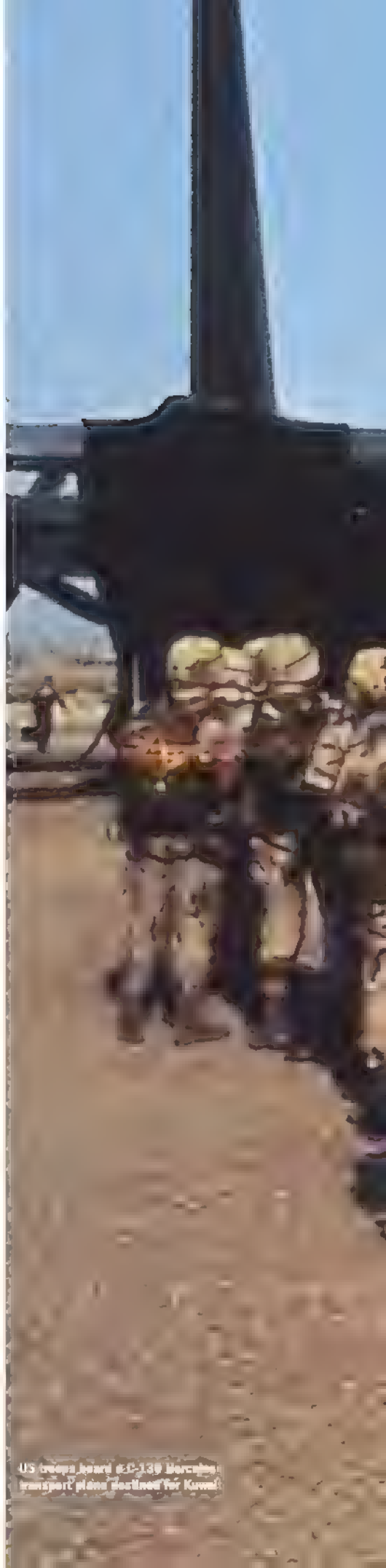
Since oil was Iraq's main source of income, his first tactic was to suggest that OPEC (the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Iraq is a member) restrict the supply to western countries, thus increasing demand and pushing up prices. However, while there was some agreement from Iraq's neighbours with regard to this policy, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates failed to comply and continued to sell oil cheaply. (At the time, the two nations had considerable interests in the west, so it suited them to keep prices down.)

It was this latter point that influenced Saddam's second tactic: he insisted that Iraq's wartime debts be suspended, claiming that the money Kuwait had loaned them came from profits made from this over-production of oil. His plea fell on deaf ears.

SADDAM BEGAN THROWING ACCUSATIONS AT HIS NEIGHBOUR

Running out of ideas, and convinced that Kuwait's refusal to budge was a threat to his country's prosperity (and his own welfare), in July 1990 Saddam began throwing direct accusations at his neighbour. First, he claimed that Kuwait had stolen around $2billion of oil from Iraq's Rumaila oilfield (near the border between the two countries). Then he alleged that it had harboured a secret agenda to acquire Iraqi territory while the latter was at war with Iran.

At breaking point, the Iraqi leader ordered his army to advance towards Kuwait, with just under 40,000 soldiers from his Republican Guard positioned along the border by 19 July (this number later grew to 100,000). While Saddam gave reassurances to The Arab League (represented by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak) that his forces wouldn't actually invade Kuwait, and that he was willing to begin face-to-face negotiations with them at a summit in Saudi Arabia on 31 July, the move was of ▶



US troops board a C-130 Hercules transport plane destined for Kuwait

Mary Evans

OPPOSING FORCES

AIRPOWER

COALITION • **IRAQ**

In total, 2,600 coalition aircraft were used in the war. Making its combat debut was the now-iconic Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk, a twin-engined stealth plane. Stalwarts such as the B-52 bomber, the F-14 Tomcat and the Royal Air Force's Tornado continued to excel, while the AH-1 Cobra helicopter – a veteran of the Vietnam War – was deployed in both the first Gulf War and the US's invasion of Iraq in 2003.

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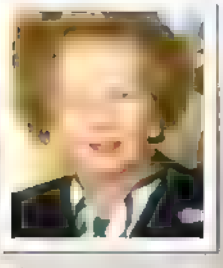
KEY FIGURES

SADDAM HUSSEIN
Having previously been a close ally of many western nations, the Iraqi President became an international pariah overnight after ordering his troops to invade Kuwait. While Saddam survived the ensuing coalition onslaught that left his country defeated, in the wake of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks his Government was accused of possessing weapons of mass destruction. When US forces invaded Baghdad in 2003, Saddam fled the city but was later captured and executed.

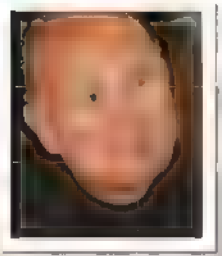
TARIQ AZIZ
The Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq from 1979-2003, Aziz acted as Saddam's right-hand man and stood in for the President at numerous high-level diplomatic summits due to concerns over Saddam's safety. It was his job to explain and justify Saddam's actions to the international community, even though he disagreed with the plan to invade Kuwait, fearing foreign – and particularly US – intervention. He has been in prison since 2003, when he surrendered to US forces invading Baghdad.

GEORGE BUSH SNR
Upon hearing of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, President Bush immediately condemned the move and, together with his coalition administration, called for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. In their failure to do so, war was declared in the skies. When the conflict was over, Bush declared a "new world order", in which international affairs could move away from the debilitating effects of nuclear rivalry and arms races, towards a more harmonious future.

COLIN POWELL
As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Bush, Powell was responsible for the overall command of military operations in the Gulf region, despite initially expressing reservations about Bush's plan to use military action to liberate Kuwait (a move that contributed to his nickname, "the reluctant warrior"). In lieu of his feelings, he deployed a ground invasion force that overwhelmed Iraqi defences. Powell stood down as Chairman in 2003, having overseen 28 crises.



MARGARET THATCHER
The British Prime Minister from 1979 until 1990, Thatcher played an instrumental role in encouraging President Bush to use force against Iraq. Just days after he'd claimed that there would be no intervention from the US, Bush flew to Colorado, to meet with Thatcher. She reportedly warned him against going "wobbly" and the President later announced in a press conference that he was considering the next steps needed to bring the invasion to an end.

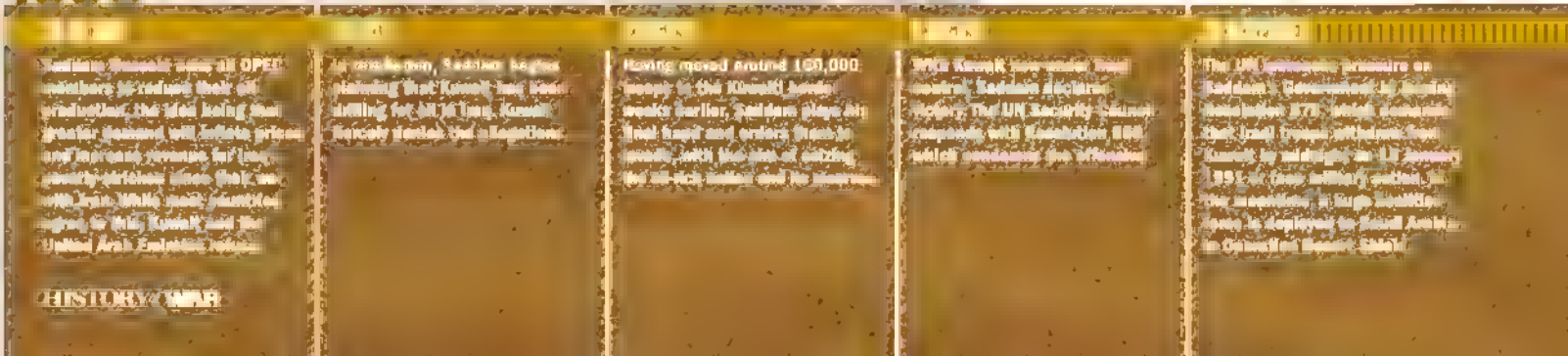


NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF
Nicknamed "Stormin' Norman" by the world's media, Schwarzkopf commanded the Allied forces during the Gulf War. When Saddam Hussein ignored President Bush's call for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, Schwarzkopf ordered six weeks of air attacks against key military installations around Baghdad and elsewhere. This was followed up with a ground offensive that allowed coalition forces to defeat Iraqi troops within 100 hours.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV
In the wake of the Cold War, the Soviet Union's economy was crumbling. Its head of state, Mikhail Gorbachev (in power from 1985-1991), was therefore reluctant to completely sever ties with Iraq and attempted to solve the Gulf crisis with a diplomatic approach. While Saddam warmed to his efforts, they failed to achieve their goal and the coalition resorted to force. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed and Gorbachev resigned as President on Christmas Day of that year.

KING FAHD
While he was a supporter of the UN and a staunch ally of the US, the King of Saudi Arabia was understandably reluctant to allow coalition forces to be stationed in his holy land during Operation Desert Shield. He was eventually persuaded by a UN delegation including Dick Cheney and Norman Schwarzkopf, who showed him satellite surveillance suggesting that Saudi was in grave danger from Iraqi forces. King Fahd remained the Saudi ruler until 1996.

1990 TIMELINE



sign ficant concern to the world at large. For one, it represented a threat to what US President George Bush Snr described as the "new world order" – a post-Cold War dawn that had seen the Iron Curtain fa l, Germany un fied and, in theory at least, an end to nuclear brinkmanship Second y, if Saddam's forces were to invade, Iraq wou d be in control of 20 per cent of the world's oil supply - and potentially 40 per cent were they to attack Saudi Arabia as we l. And thirdly, though Saddam had previously en oyed good relations with the west (by 1990, Britain was Iraq's third-largest trade partner, wh e France had supplied it w th b llions of francs' worth of arms), stories had begun to emerge of the Iraqi President's tyrannical ruling methods, which extended to torture, murder and a willingness to use chemical and bio ogical weapons - even on his own Kurdish people

So the US Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, arranged an emergency meeting with Saddam, who exp ained, "Brother President Mubarak told me [the Kuwaitis] were scared. They said troops were only 20km north of The Arab League line. I said to him that regardless of what's there – whether they're po ce, border guards or army – and regardless of how many are there, g ve [the Kuwaits] our word that we're not going to do anything until we meet with them. When we see that there's hope, nothing will happen." Suffic ent y reassured, Glaspie flew back to Washington on 30 July and went on ho day.

The following day, as schedu ed, Saddam's representative, Izzat Ibrah m, began d.scuss ons with the Kuwa ti Crown Prince, Sa'd Abdallah A-Sabah, in Jeddah. Iraq demanded $10billion for the loss of oi from its Rumaila oilfields and, in return, prom.sed to reduce the number of its troops a ong the border. When Kuwait denied the allegat ons and came back with an offer of $9b llion, Saddam saw it as a slight against his nation and, despite an agreement to resume negot.ations on 4 August, gave the order to attack. "The Kuwa tis acted in an arrogant and provocative manner," Iraqi Deputy Prime M nister Tar q Az z later insisted, "and that led to the deterioration of the situation."

In the early hours of 2 August 1990, around 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and almost 2,000 tanks descended on Kuwait City, wh e helicopters dropped troops in other strategic sites across the country. By 1pm, the Kuwaiti resistance had been all but defeated and its royal family had fled to Saudi Arabia. (Curiously, as de from the aforementioned reasons, the Iraqis cla med that it was their r ght to invade Kuwait. In a letter sent to fore gn min sters, Az z denounced Britain for having created an "artificial entity called Kuwa t" that cut off Iraq from "its natural access to the waters of the Arab Gulf".)

Some 6,500 miles away in Washington DC, the Pentagon watched events develop and

considered its response. With the disaster of the Vietnam War still haunting the American psyche, President Bush and his advisors were initially apprehensive about resolving the situation with force. Recalled then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, "My two concerns were: I didn't know how rapidly we could bring it to a conclusion, and I wasn't sure what the casualty level would be, because I didn't know whether [the Iraqis] would use chemicals, or whether we would have some bad luck some place along the line."

Margaret Thatcher, on the other hand, was in no doubt as to what action needed to be taken. The British Prime Minister was in Colorado for a conference when she received the message from her Private Secretary, Charles Powell, that Iraq had invaded Kuwait. In a later interview with *Frontline*, she explained, "The following morning, I woke up early, went out for a walk and got things worked out in my mind. But it was clear: aggression must be stopped. That's the lesson of this century. If an aggressor gets away with it, others will want to get away with it, too. I thought we ought to throw [Saddam] out so decisively that he could never think of doing it again."

THE STORY GOES THAT THATCHER TOLD THE US PRESIDENT, "REMEMBER, GEORGE, THIS IS NO TIME TO GO WOBBLY" – THOUGH DICK CHENEY DISMISSED THIS

(Indeed, the story goes that Thatcher told the US President, "Remember, George, this is no time to go wobbly" – though then-Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney later dismissed this.)

Eventually, coalition leaders reached a compromise: the UN passed Resolution 660 condemning Saddam's actions and calling for an immediate withdrawal from Kuwait, with the threat of economic sanctions if he didn't comply. If it seemed like a softly-softly approach, it was only temporary: in November 1990, another Resolution (678) stated that if Iraq failed to pull out its troops by 15 January 1991, all hell would break loose. "Withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally and immediately," President Bush warned Saddam, "or face the consequences."

Over the next six months, the coalition prepared for war. While it would be a gargantuan task moving 750,000 troops, thousands of main battle tanks (MBTs) and countless naval ships to the Persian Gulf, the task would be aided by the fact that – coincidentally – only a few weeks before Iraq's invasion, a plan had been put in place by US Central Command (CENTCOM) designed to defend Middle Eastern oilfields. The trouble was, that plan involved setting up base in Saudi Arabia: one of the holiest countries in the Muslim world.

To persuade Saudi King Fahd to allow thousands of Christian soldiers to descend upon his land, a UN delegation showed him satellite intelligence that revealed thousands of Iraqi troops close to the Saudi border. The King needed no more encouragement: he granted his permission and a defence plan – Operation Desert Shield – was set in motion.

With pressure mounting on them from almost all sides, the Iraqis were offered a hand of diplomacy by Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union. For once, the Soviets stood firm alongside the US in demanding Iraq's withdrawal but, with his country's own economy crumbling around him, Gorbachev was wary of destroying relations with Iraq by adopting too aggressive an approach. "We gave them a clear-cut signal that we would be together with the UN and that what they had done was unacceptable," the Russian premier later told *Frontline*. "But on the other hand, we were acting as friends of Iraq. If they reversed the situation, they could preserve relations. We didn't say we were breaking everything at once."

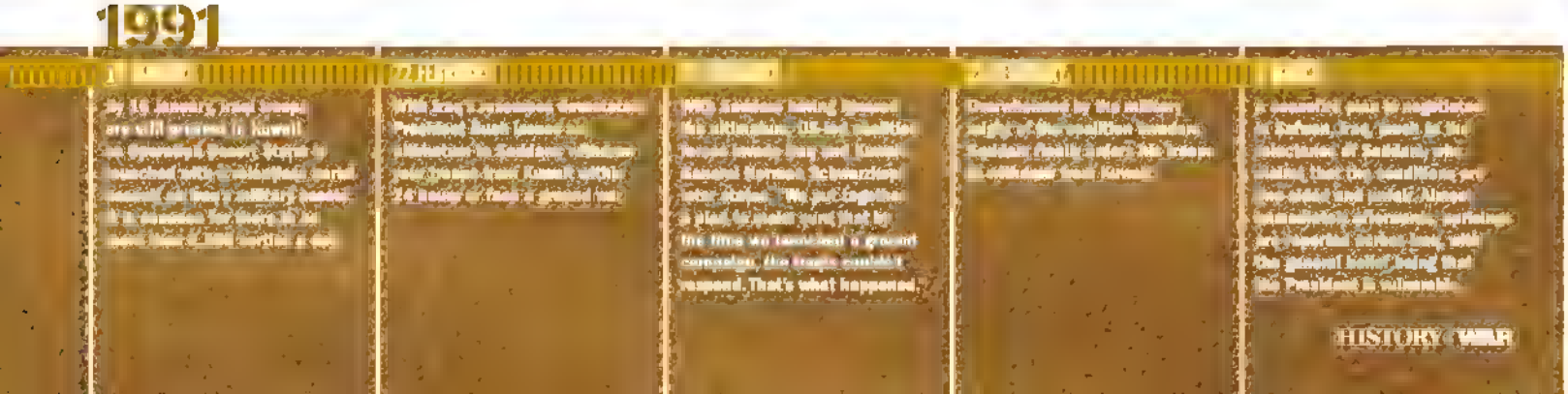
In a letter to Gorbachev, Saddam was seemingly grateful for the peace offering – although his hesitancy towards the Soviets' allies was clear: "Even though we will keep our promise, Mr President, we do know that the Americans – especially their President – have no honour and we do not trust them. Therefore, we are working only with your proposal."

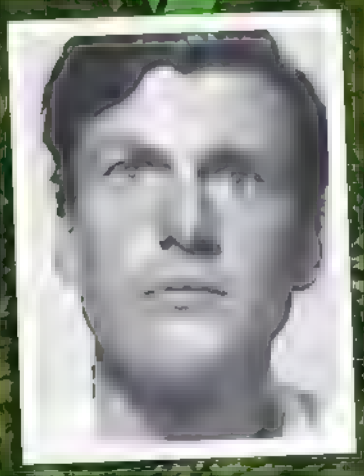
Alas, such cordialities failed to amount to an agreement between the UN and the Iraqis, and the 15 January deadline passed with no movement from Saddam's forces. "We tried over and over to bring about a peaceful solution," remembered General Schwarzkopf. "Countless diplomats from the east, west, north, south, from the then-Communist bloc – they all went to Baghdad, because that's where the peaceful solution had to come from. And then Tariq Aziz came out and spoke for 45 minutes. He didn't even mention the word 'Kuwait'. The country had been blotted off the map as far as the Iraqis were concerned, and that was irrevocable. Nothing else was going to change after that."

And so, on 17 January 1991, the UN changed its tactics from defensive to offensive. Overnight, Operation Desert Shield became Operation Desert Storm, with swarms of coalition planes mounting an aerial assault that saw 88,500 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq's military and civilian infrastructures in the space of a month – much of the action witnessed by viewers at home via those eerie green images.

It was merely the first part of a lethal campaign that would bring Saddam's forces to their knees within six weeks. And while many liberal observers condemned it, General Schwarzkopf was adamant that flexing military muscle had been the only way to solve the crisis. "Some people say we should've let the sanctions run a little bit longer," he later said. "That's very nice to say if you're sitting in the comfort of your living room in the United States of America. But if you were in Kuwait and you were seeing your children tortured and your wife raped, was it OK to wait? When we put it all together, there was no question. It was time to go and get it over with."

President Bush [illegible] a National Security Council meeting following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, 2-4 August 1990





THE MAD FORTNIGHT

Second World War: With the Japanese extending their power in Asia with excursions into the Pacific islands, guerrilla-trained British hero Freddy Spencer Chapman embarked on a deadly and explosive mission to derail them. Brian Moynahan follows his exploits behind enemy lines

WHILE ADOLF HITLER CONTINUED his campaign in Europe, Japan set about dominating the Pacific. Having left the League of Nations in 1933, the Japanese adopted an aggressive foreign policy that saw them step up their attempted subjugation of China. Tensions between the two countries came to a head in 1937 with skirmishes at the Lugou Bridge, a vital access route to Beijing – an episode that ignited the Second Sino-Japanese War. Seeing Japan's imperial ambitions as a threat to their interests in the region, many nations – including the Soviet Union, the UK, the US and even Germany (before Japan signed the Tripartite Pact that united it with the other Axis countries) – began providing military and financial aid.

It was America's economic embargoes that helped persuade Japan to attack Pearl Harbor in 1941. With America distracted (temporarily, at least) the Japanese were clear to extend their offensive to Hong Kong, Singapore, Burma, the Philippines, New Guinea and Malaya. Japan needed oil – its navy alone consumed 400 tons an hour. And while Malaya didn't have much of it, conquering the island would enable easier access to the oil-rich islands of Borneo, Java and Sumatra.

BACKSTORY
It's 1942. Japan's assaults on China have been condemned by the Allied nations, who have placed embargoes on the empire. In retaliation, Japan have declared all-out war and begun conquering the Pacific islands.

When General Yamashita's 25th Army attacked Malaya with 60,000 soldiers, 500 aircraft and an armada of war ships, Allied forces didn't stand a chance. At the time, the Allies' presence in the Far East suffered from a lack of funding – the priority was winning the war in the west – so most of their air force in the region was destroyed within days, while their ground troops were unprepared and poorly equipped.

Under siege, they fled en masse to Singapore. But left behind, stranded in the Malayan jungle, were Freddy Spencer Chapman and his two comrades, Bill Harvey and John Sartin. While that would be a terrifying prospect for most, guerrilla-trained Chapman saw it as a chance to launch a counter-offensive. Before long, he'd devised a deadly mission for the three of them. Daubed the "mad fortnight", it was designed to derail the Japanese army – sometimes literally...

Freddy made reconnaissance trips to fill in details of paths and game trails where they could not be detected. On one, he was walking along a pipeline when a tiger bounded over it some distance ahead. It gave a fleeting impression of "infinite grace and strength" before disappearing. Freddy had no fear of it. Only diseased and toothless tigers became man-eaters, and this one was in its prime.

Police tracker dogs were a different matter, so Freddy and the team planned to walk along stream beds for part of every sortie, to make sure they broke the trail of their scent. Height was another problem. They were too tall to pass for Chinese or Malays, but the Tamils who worked as rubber tappers on the estates had a similar build. They were dark-skinned, almost black, so Freddy concocted a dye by mixing lamp-black – the soot from kerosene lamps – with iodine, coffee and purple crystals of potassium permanganate, used as disinfectant. Once backed up, they completed the disguise with a white shirt, a *dhoti* or sarong around the middle, and a white cloth tied around the head. It helped that Tamils were a timid folk and kept to themselves. Harvey was a fluent Tamil speaker, too.

They came within sight of patrols of Japanese on bicycles, looking for them. Once, they were so close that Harvey "whined to them in abject Tamil". Freddy covered his face and bowed low to them, in the gesture of submission that the Japanese demanded of all passers-by – though, as he said, if you were tall and your face was running with sweat that might be washing the Tamil colour from your English features, "you were only too glad to bow down before anybody".

Each was to carry a tommy gun, a pistol and two hand grenades, plus an army pack filled with explosives and British battledress. They planned to change into uniform as they approached a target, so as not to be executed as spies if they were captured. They were to operate at night, leaving the camp as darkness fell after 5pm. Leu Kim [a member of the Chinese resistance] gave them a torch, and they slipped a green leaf in front of the bulb to give a ghostly green light that preserved their night vision. Freddy found that putting a few fireflies or luminous centipedes in the torch reflector gave enough glow to read a map or lay a charge if the battery failed. If still out at daybreak, they planned to rest up in the jungle, wading up a stream bed in case the German shepherd dogs from Tanjong Malim were sent after them. Towards nightfall, they would change into their Tamil outfits, keeping a pistol and a grenade tucked in their sarongs, and slip quietly back to camp.

A single click made with the side of the tongue and the teeth meant "stop" or "danger". Two clicks was "OK" or "go on". Freddy also taught the others a rallying call to use if they were lost or scattered. He chose the hunting cry of the British tawny owl, denizen of ancient woodland and churchyards. Country boys – as Freddy had been – called up owls by blowing into cupped hands through their thumbs, making an eerie, shrill *kew-wick*. The piercing cry carried a great distance in the thickest woodland. It could not be confused with any other jungle cry, he said, yet "to the uninitiated – and we included the Japs in this class – it passes without notice in the variety of weird nocturnal noises".

They wrapped their tommy guns in tape so that they would not gleam in the moonlight. They brushed their battledress with mud to break up its outline, and ran past one another to make sure nothing caught the light or rattled. They went through cramp-inducing practice to walk heel-first on hard ground, and toe-first on soft, to minimise the sound of each step. Faces blackened, bodies camouflaged, they found they could pass within ten yards or so of villagers without being spotted. When a Tamil or Malay looked directly at them and spotted their ghostly figures, he sometimes took them for spirits and rushed off with a scream

The mission begins

By 3 February, they were ready. The ambush sites were at least five miles from the *kongsihouse* The first target was a bridge on the railway line half a mile south of Tanjong Malim station. The station itself was on the main road half a mile or so from the town. It would take the Japanese about 20 minutes to react with troops from the town garrison, although there was always the danger that Freddy and his team might run into a patrol that was already out and active.

The bridge was a three-hour walk from the camp. They crossed the Bernam river into the Escot Estate as soon as it was dark, then followed the edge of the estate road towards the railway, detouring into the rubber when they passed the coolie lines, the long wood-and-brick hutments where the tappers were housed.

The dynamiters' dream, Freddy said, was "to cause the head-on collision of two trains, both full of troops, in a tunnel". There were no tunnels here. The bridge he'd chosen carried the line over a river. It was one of the heavier types of Malay Railways' suspended girder bridges, set in stone abutments. Freddy and his team could carry no more than 100lb of plastic high explosives between the three of them, and that would not be enough to bring the bridge down The best Freddy could do was to put 30lb of explosives in the middle of the track on the north side of the bridge, while Sartin connected the charge to a pressure switch under the rail. The weight of a train would set it off. Freddy hoped that the engine would crash into the side of the bridge and topple the structure into the river

THE DYNAMITERS' DREAM WAS "TO CAUSE THE HEAD-ON COLLISION OF TWO TRAINS, FULL OF TROOPS, IN A TUNNEL"

British troops train in the Malayan jungle, prepared to defend the territory from invading Japanese forces. Eventually, they were forced to flee to Singapore

They walked on to a second bridge of solid masonry that carried the line over the main road. They set a series of 5lb charges along the line, to be detonated by time pencils. When they squeezed the copper pencil, a phial of acid inside it would break open and begin to eat through a fine wire. When the wire snapped, it would free a spring that would strike a percussion cap, setting off the fuse. The delay varied from 30 minutes to 24 hours, dictated by the thickness of the wire. After laying the first night's ration of explosives, Freddy climbed a telegraph pole along the track, and cut the lines with a pair of pliers

As they left the track and regained the rubber, they heard a train leave Tanjong Malim station. "Our excitement was so great that we could scarcely breathe," Freddy recalled. Yard by yard, with agonising slowness, its "clanking and chugging and wheezing" drew closer. He had convinced himself that the pressure switch was a dud when a sudden blinding light and crash split the night and echoed off the hills. Bits of metal hissed into the air and fell with thuds hundreds of yards from the explosion. Shouting mingled with the hiss of escaping steam. The three men resisted the urge to slip back and look at their hand work, instead speeding back through the dark plantation to their camp. They heard two more explosions as they went.

Leu Kim told them next day that the train had run off the line and was wrecked, but had not done much damage to the bridge. The Japanese had sent patrols out through the *kampongs* south of the town to look for them, arresting Chinese as they went. Freddy and the stay-behind parties were not the only resistance to the Japanese in Malaya. The Chinese trained at 101 STS [a warfare school in Singapore], and their guerrilla bands – both Kuomintang (nationalist) and communist – were still at large. Most Chinese were sympathetic to the guerrillas, and many risked torture and hanging by the Kempeitai (Japanese military police) to help them.

Freddy had asked Leu Kim to put them in touch with the guerrillas. Two young communists – smartly dressed, on bicycles – duly came to the *kongsihouse*. They agreed that they all had ▶

Getty

To increase their transport options, the Japanese converted trucks to run on Malayan railway tracks. But their efforts were hampered by Chapman's guerrilla campaign

the same aim, of defeating the Japanese. If the worst happened and Singapore fell, Freddy suggested that the guerrillas might help the British reach the coast to get out to Malaya. If they did, they could keep whatever arms and explosives remained as a reward. The Chinese said they would have to consult their Party leader about cooperation, but they agreed they would help with moving stores. They promised to send a party of 12 Chinese cyclists to Sungei Salak not later than 3pm on 15 February.

Freddy decided to strike the line north of Tanjong Malim on their next raid on 5 February. A group of iron bridges crossed streams to the south of the station at Kampong Behrang, seven miles up the line from their last raid. The three set off at dusk and made good progress to the Behrang rubber estate. Two miles of rough ground lay between them and the railway. It was a swell of hillocks, streams, and patches of jungle and rubber seedlings, difficult to distinguish in the darkness. When they reached the line, they heard men approaching. Freddy took them for a Japanese patrol and hid with the others in the long grass beside the track. Some of the men were wearing broad-brimmed hats – they were noisy and seemed very tired, and they trailed a scent of sour sweat and tobacco behind them. Freddy found the odour "strangely familiar". He realised that they were British soldiers still on the loose. He decided not to go after them. He might be wrong, he rationalised – and anyway, there were more of them than Leu Kim could cope with. Better to let them go.

Freddy helped Sartin put a charge on the line at a curve above an embankment, ideal for a derailment. Harvey kept watch. Suddenly, Sartin gasped: "Christmas!" The former boy soldier could not bring himself to swear in front of an officer. "You're lucky men!" Indeed they were: by rights, their body parts should have been sprayed across the embankment. Sartin had put ten pounds of explosives under the outer rail on the bend, and connected the detonating fuse to the pressure switch. He'd had to pack this up with stones so that it just reached the bottom of the rail, where the weight of a passing train would trigger it. But he'd shoved it too hard and activated the switch. The percussion cap, "by the grace of God", was a dud.

Dawn was getting close. They put the rest of the explosive on a little girder bridge just south of the Behrang station. It took half an hour to put separate charges against the rails and girders, and to connect each one so that they would go off simultaneously as the train tripped the pressure switch. They were still tying the charges in position to stop them being dislodged by vibrations when Freddy thought he heard a train to the north. They listened. Nothing. Then

Freddy Spencer Chapman's timeline

1941

24 DECEMBER

Chapman leaves Kuala Lumpur with ten volunteers – Bill Harvey and John Sartin. Armed with tommy guns, hand grenades and explosives, their mission is to get behind Japanese lines to report back on their strengths and weaknesses.

LATE DECEMBER

Following their mission, the men arrive at the prearranged rendezvous point to meet with British forces, only to discover they have been left behind, assumed dead or missing.

1942

1 FEBRUARY

Chapman launches his guerrilla campaign known as the "mad fortnight", whereby he, Harvey and Sartin will creep through the jungle night after night to lay explosives designed to destroy Japanese vehicles and bridges.

13 MARCH

The three men make a dash for the coast to escape to India, but run into a Japanese patrol on the way. Harvey and Sartin are captured, whilst Chapman retreats back into the jungle.

9 JULY

Chapman and a Royal Navy officer, who has also escaped capture, are led by Chinese guerrillas to a new camp. On the way, they encounter a truck of Japanese, who kill the Navy man. Chapman throws two grenades into the truck and sprints to safety. He spends six months training Chinese rebels.

1943

DECEMBER

Chapman is joined by two Special Forces officers, Jules Davis and Richard Broome, who have landed in Malaya to coordinate guerrilla activity for a planned Allied invasion. They work together for over a year as a three-man unit, training Chinese guerrillas and making contact with other resistance groups.

a definite whistle. A train was approaching fast. But they mislaid the pliers and Sartin had no time to set the switch. He connected the main fuse to a simple detonator on top of the rail.

The train got so close that they could see its "dark mass" as they raced along the track, gaining on them until they slid down the embankment and fell into a foul-smelling swamp. The explosion battered their eardrums a moment later, shaking the mud under their feet, before lapsing into a ferocious shriek and grinding of metal. Missiles roared over their heads and crashed into the swamp – lumps of coal or metal or bits of body, they could not tell. The train "dragged itself slowly over the bridge", clanking with distress. The cab of the locomotive went slowly past, crowded with Japanese troops. It came to a halt a little further up.

The two terrified Tamil drivers came back down the line with an escort of Japanese, who flashed their torches at the goods wagons as they passed. Freddy covered them with his gun but they did not see him. They satisfied themselves that the train was out of action, and set off south down the line for Tanjong Malim.

THE BOMB EXPLODED BENEATH THE TRUCK'S FUEL TANK, ILLUMINATING THE AMBUSH SITE LIKE A STAGE SET

Freddy climbed out of the swamp as the Japanese left. Water and steam were gushing out of the engine onto the line. Harvey threw a grenade into the firebox, and they took cover as it exploded. The brick abutments were damaged, and the foot thick girders of the bridge were cut in two. It was getting light and they sped away through the rubber, slackening their pace when they regained thick jungle. They heard the time-pencil charges exploding for hours afterwards.

Leu Kim brought them reports later of the two wrecked trains still lying on their sides. Freddy still feared that they were not hurting the enemy as hard as they should. Blown road bridges had barely made the Japanese pause during their advance, and their emergency rail gangs soon had damaged track up and running again. He feared that locomotives could jump a six-foot gap in a rail – he thought cutting both rails for at least ten feet was the minimum needed to derail a train – and he was worried that they were running out of explosives. Leu Kim brought them fresh detonators, fuses and several hundred pounds of gelignite from a friend in tin-mining. But they were using a hundred pounds of explosives a night, and risking capture by the stepped-up Japanese patrolling of the railway, whilst their arsenal of tommy-gun ammunition and hand grenades went untouched. Freddy decided to look for targets on the main road instead.

Frightening sight

Route One ran from Singapore through Kuala Lumpur and on up to the Thai border. It skirted the Main Range, which rose to its east in an unbroken line, first black against the rising sun, then purple with heat and bruised with rain clouds as the day wore on. Rubber estates bordered it for much of its length from Tanjong Malim to Ipoh. In places, it passed the red scars and derelict moon landscapes of old tin tailings.

Most of the daylight traffic was made up of Japanese lorries, staff cars, motorcycles and cycle troops moving south. The few civilian pedestrians and cyclists disappeared at night. Large convoys of trucks and staff cars moved south through the small hours. They drove very fast with full headlights and little interval between them, "just asking to be ambushed", Freddy thought. They came across their first target by chance, as they were returning from setting time charges on the railway. Six trucks were parked in the grass beside the road. Their sidelights were switched off and there were no signs of sentries. Harvey heard snoring coming from them. They worked from truck to truck, pushing explosives between the crank cases and clutch. It took them an hour, working in silence. They connected the charges with four feet of safety fuse, giving them two minutes to get clear. Freddy was disappointed that none of the trucks caught fire in the explosions, but noted that neither the trucks nor the drivers were "much further use to the Japanese war effort".

They invented a new bomb to use on the road. Several hundred pounds of gelignite had deteriorated in the heat, so badly that the nitroglycerine was seeping out of it. It was unstable but they were reluctant to dump it. Sartin was storing it in lengths of bamboo. It struck them that a length of bamboo lying on the road would not be noticed. The explosive inside it could be detonated by a pull-switch, set off by a length of wire pulled by the bomber lying at a safe distance. If there was no cover for him, the bomb could be set off automatically by a trip-wire. Sartin prepared a 5lb bomb in an 18-inch section of bamboo with a pull-switch. They found a good position for an ambush, where the rubber trees grew up to the roadside and a bank gave shelter against the bomb blast. The railway line would allow a speedy getaway.

Fifty charges operated by time pencils were set on the sleepers at the junctions of rail lengths, so that both rails would be damaged. Then the men took up ambush positions on the road. A bamboo charge was put in the middle of the road. Sartin held the wire. He was to pull it when Freddy tapped him on the back. Freddy and Harvey would then throw two grenades apiece, and empty their guns into the target, before making off up the railway line.

As they waited "in intense excitement", the first of their railway charges exploded. They heard a train coming from the north, but it stopped at Tanjong Malim. Suddenly, they heard lorries on the road and Freddy counted six sets of headlights coming towards them. He waited until the lead vehicle was almost on them and tapped Sartin's shoulder. The bomb exploded beneath the truck's fuel tank, illuminating the ambush site like a stage set. A second truck crashed into the wreckage, and a third slewed sideways under violent braking. Harvey emptied his tommy gun. Freddy threw his grenades and fired, and "found myself racing down the path, floodlit by the funeral pyre of the Jap lorries".

The Japanese did not have their weapons ready, and the three reached the railway line before the enemy opened fire. But a frightening sight came into view. "We saw a party of men with lanterns a hundred yards up the track," said Freddy. It was a Japanese patrol sent down from Tanjong Malim to investigate the earlier explosion, and they opened fire. The trio plunged through the rubber, the night "hideous with the noise of rifle, machine-gun and even mortar fire". They were in real peril as visible targets for less than a minute, but the Japanese kept on firing for over an hour. Once they were safely past the coolie lines on the Escot Estate, the three got their breath back, congratulating themselves on a successful – "though terrifying" – ambush.

Freddy fretted over ambush techniques. The Japanese were alerted by now – they thought that several hundred British and Australians were on the loose. In truth, they were three men living rough. The convoys they were attacking could contain a cavalry of 170 men – outnumbering them by more than 50 to one. ▶

1944

11 MAY
Chapman is captured by a Japanese patrol during his search for British ethnologist Pat Noone, but persuades the Japanese officer not to kill him by claiming he has lost his Japanese friend and is not an enemy to them. He escapes during the night back into the jungle.

25 JULY
After spending over two months in the jungle alone, and having been struck down repeatedly by illness, Chapman finds his way back to Davis and Broome.

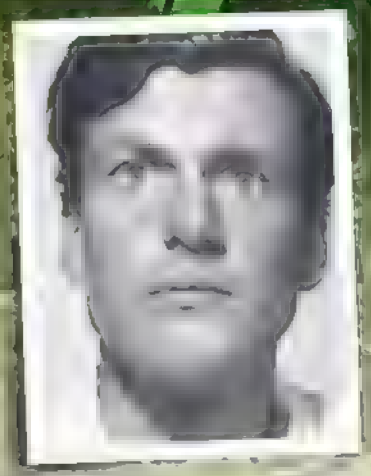
NOVEMBER
Chapman, Davis and Broome manage to rig up a wireless set, whereupon they hear news of Allied success in Europe and the Far East.

1945

JANUARY
Chapman succumbs to the worst illness yet, and is immobilised for almost three weeks. Davis and Broome build a two-way radio and transmit a message to Ceylon for reinforcements and rescue.

27 APRIL
The three men set off to make the prearranged rendezvous for 13 May. They are forced to travel by way of rigorous trekking and paddling.

13 MAY
Chapman swims out to a submarine and is rescued.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL FREDDY SPENCER CHAPMAN

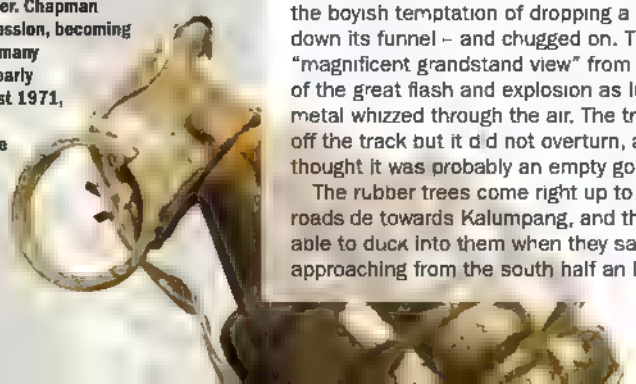
Born in 1907 and orphaned by the age of nine, Chapman was brought up in the Lake District by an elderly vicar and his wife, and it was here that he nurtured his rugged durability, stamina and resourcefulness. Throughout school and his education at Cambridge University, Chapman pushed himself into mountainous treks and extended expeditions into the British countryside. During his twenties, he ventured to the Arctic, Greenland and the Himalayas, where he further honed his survival skills before the outbreak of the Second World War. After taking teaching jobs in the Scottish Highlands and Singapore between 1941 and 1942, Chapman received the news that the Japanese had invaded Malaya, whereupon he disappeared into the Malayan jungle with a group of hastily trained guerillas.

Chapman and his comrades spent the next two and a half years behind enemy lines in the jungle, sabotaging Japanese advances through the destruction of valuable bridges and vehicles, a campaign that saw the killing of between 500 and 1,500 Japanese soldiers. As time wore on, Chapman found himself fighting alone, and he was repeatedly struck down with medical conditions including malaria, blackwater fever and exhaustion. Despite his previous training and expeditions, nothing could have prepared him for the humid, swampy conditions and the vast, uninhabitable landscape of the Malayan jungle.

He did, however, find himself in the protection of Chinese guerillas who had suffered terrible fates at the hands of Japanese soldiers. The Chinese rebels nursed Chapman and supplied him with food and artillery to aid his mission.

After more than three years in the jungle, Chapman made his escape by way of submarine after making radio contact with British forces.

Chapman wrote of his experiences in a book called *The Jungle Is Neutral*, published after the war had ended. He later married and had three children, and was given the Distinguished Service Order. Chapman returned to the teaching profession, becoming headmaster at schools in Germany and South Africa, but retired early owing to ill health. On 8 August 1971, Chapman shot himself in the head after suffering one of the periodic bouts of depression that had plagued him since his Cambridge University days. He was 64 years old.



By now, Freddy said, "our muscles and nerves could stand no more". They felt exhilarated and alive – and that was the danger. The greatest risk in living dangerously, Freddy wrote, be it "rock-climbing, driving a motor car fast, or shooting tigers or Japs", came when vigilance became prey to over-confidence and exhaustion. Each raid took 12 hours or so, and they had to cover as many miles in careful silence, carrying 50lb packs. They were short of explosives and fuses, and would have to go to the Sungei Sempan dump to get more. The Japanese had massacred Chinese in several *kampongs* close to Tanjong Malim in retaliation for their casualties. Leu Kim told Freddy that they had held back 2,000 men – two regiments – at Tanjong Malim and Kuala Kubu specifically to hunt him. They had posted sentries on all the rail bridges, and their patrols were getting closer to the *kongsihouse*. Leu Kim could not sleep for worry of what would happen to him and his family if they so much as suspected him.

Freddy couldn't be sure what he had achieved, in darkness illuminated only by explosions and burning fuel. His best guess was seven or eight trains derailed, 15 bridges damaged, rail track cut in about 60 places, and 40 trucks and cars damaged or destroyed. He put the casualties inflicted at between 500 and 1,500 Japanese.

At the least, he felt he had proved that his "mad fortnight" had fully justified the idea of stay-behind parties. Had he been given a large number of British officers, backed by Chinese volunteers, and Malays and Indians, he was sure that they would have slowed down the Japanese enough to have allowed the British 18th Division and the Australian 9th Division to have gone into action. As it was, the British arrived in Singapore just in time to be taken prisoner, and the Australians got no further than Java.

Boyish temptation

By dusk on 15 February, there was no sign of the Chinese guerrillas (the fugitives did not know it but Chin Peng, a rising star in the Perak Communist Party, was cycling to catch them before they left, but his bicycle broke down on the way and he was two hours late). So the three Englishmen set off to return to the goldmine camp. To stay any longer would put Leu Kim in ever greater danger, and it would be unsafe to try to get past the Japanese garrison at Kuala Kubu near dawn. Each man was carrying a tommy gun, a 20lb pack and 30lb of explosives, with which to bid farewell to the Japanese.

They put a 35lb charge on the railway line as they crossed it after emerging from the Escot Estate. Sartin dug it in a foot below a sleeper and connected it to pressure switches on both rails. They had only got half a mile, to the bridge carrying the main road over the track, when they heard a train coming towards them from the south. It passed them as they hid below the parapet – Freddy almost succumbing to the boyish temptation of dropping a grenade down its funnel – and chugged on. They had a "magnificent grandstand view" from the parapet of the great flash and explosion as lumps of metal whizzed through the air. The train came off the track but it did not overturn, and Freddy thought it was probably an empty goods train.

The rubber trees come right up to the roadside towards Kalumpang, and the men were able to duck into them when they saw headlights approaching from the south half an hour later. They counted seven lorries going past, full of Japanese with their weapons at the ready. They presumed that the garrison at Tanjong Malim, still convinced they were up against "hundreds" of Australians and British, felt they needed reinforcements from Kuala Kubu to deal with the saboteurs. After a bend, Route One runs dead straight through the little town of Kerling, with the usual rows of shop-houses and a Chinese temple. Though there was no moon or streetlights, lightning was playing over the mountains a few miles to the east, and they were terribly exposed as they tiptoed along the pavement past padlocked stalls and shop-houses. Wooden verandas hung over the pavement from the first floor of the buildings, and they heard the "heavy breathing and snoring" of sleepers as they passed beneath them.

They were safely through the town when fresh headlights showed on the road behind them. There was only seedling rubber at the roadside here, but it offered some camouflage and they ran into it. They did not see the barbed wire fence protecting it. "For God's sake, keep still" Freddy cried as they became entangled in it. Headlights "floodlit" them as the trucks passed, possibly returning from the wrecked train site. The three men hung on the wire in strange poses. A barb entered Freddy's forehead, giving him a scar. They had blackened their faces, and

"FOR GOD'S SAKE, KEEP STILL!" FREDDY CRIED AS THEY BECAME ENTANGLED IN THE BARBED WIRE

their uniforms were dark with mud, but they thought that their guns and square packs must catch the eye. The trucks did not stop, however.

They reached the town of Kuala Kubu at four in the morning. The Japanese had taken over the European bungalows on the outskirts. The lights were still burning, and they could see figures moving about through the windows. They heard singing, probably to celebrate the victory in Singapore, though it would be two days before the fugitives learnt that the island had fallen.

Beyond the town, they found a woodcutter's path leading steeply up off the road into jungle. A stream flowed down next to it, and they found open ground to spread out their groundsheets and sleep. Sartin fixed up a booby trap and they slept all the next day, 16 February, before setting off for the Gap once it was dark. The last time Freddy had been on the road, at the beginning of January, he had swept up in the powerful Ford V8. They had 17 miles to cover now, and 2,500 feet to climb, and they tried to rest their legs by stealing onto the back of a bullock cart that a Tamil was driving up the road. All went well until he turned and saw three tall white men in filthy rags nursing tommy guns on the back. He let off a great scream and fled away into the dark. Freddy had fondly imagined that 'any fool could drive a pair of bullocks'. He found that the three of them could not get the beasts to budge an inch.

The road steepens as it climbs and winds. Its great beauties – glimpses of a lake through the mighty trees, and the tumbling waters of the Sungei Selangor – were hidden in the darkness. The men grew exhausted and they could not stay awake when they paused for a rest. They found

While their campaigns in the Pacific enjoyed initial success, Japan – along with the other Axis nations – were eventually defeated by the Allies. Here, General Yamashita (right) surrenders to US officers

a road mender's hut by the road, so they went inside and slept for a little.

The final stage up to the pass is gruelling, the S-bends following each other tightly. They reached the Gap and they thought there might be sentries about, but they could smell no tobacco, the surest sign of Japanese soldiers. They went cautiously through the bungalows on the slope above the road. Shebbeare's bungalow had been looted and was a mess, but Freddy rescued some copies of the *Himalayan Journal* and one of Shebbeare's Everest diaries. They had meant to sleep in the jungle, but it dawned with a cold mist that turned to rain. The Gap had – still has – a rest house, without the chintz and cocktail chic of the hotels along the watershed at Fraser's Hill, but a solid and dependable place, painted black and white to give it a half-timbered air, with verandas and big, stone fireplaces, and a games room and a bar with sporting prints, like an inn or a shooting lodge in the Scottish Highlands. It is built high above the road on a bank faced with granite blocks.

It was the last place – so Freddy hoped – that the Japanese would think to look for them. Only the small furniture had been looted. He noted that the best bedroom had 'some excellent spring bedspreads' and its windows looked directly down over the road. So they set themselves up in this comforting place, barricaded the door and manhandled a wardrobe so that they could clamber through a trap-door to the roof, and fell deeply asleep. Japanese cars and lorries passed immediately below their window. In the afternoon, they found kidney beans and English potatoes in the garden above the rest-house, and cooked them in the kitchen. Some Chinese were living close by and they bought chickens from them. The Chinese said the Japanese had broadcast that Singapore had fallen. "We refused to believe it," Freddy said.

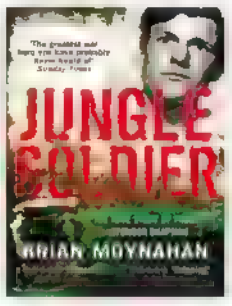
Huge defeat

As night fell, they left for the 20-mile journey to Sungei Sempan. It was all downhill, and the road was more precipitous on this side of the Main Range than coming up from the west. They bought three bicycles at some Tamil coolie lines along the road, and raced down, getting to Sungei Sempan before dawn. They were shocked to find that the power station was "ablaze with light" and that a large Rising Sun flag was nailed to the wall of Alves' bungalow. They hid their bicycles and climbed directly up the pipeline to their camp. Sartin remembered the booby traps they had left behind them just in time to prevent them being blown up. They called on Alves later in the morning, after watching the bungalow carefully to make sure no Japanese were about.

He was a changed man. The Japanese had visited him, left him the flag and terrified him. He feared they might reappear at any minute, and said that the valley was full of Chinese and Malay informers. All his Malay coolies had fled. His wireless was working, and they listened to a Japanese broadcast from Singapore in English. It confirmed the catastrophe: Singapore was lost. They were utterly alone. They went back to their camp and ate their fill of porridge. Then they slept.

Despite the heroics of Freddy Spencer Chapman and his team, the Allies ultimately suffered a huge defeat at the hands of the Japanese, which culminated in the fall of Singapore and, effectively, an end to the British Empire's presence in Asia. Military historian Arthur Swinson called it "one of the most disastrous campaigns in British military history", with 9,000 Commonwealth troops killed or wounded, and another 130,000 captured.

Having been taken prisoner by both Japanese troops and Chinese bandits, been unconscious in the jungle for 17 days, and been struck down by everything from tick-typhus and backwater fever to malaria, it was by his own hand that Chapman finally lost his life. Following his suicide in 1971 (he'd been suffering from ill health for some time), biographer Claire Freeman paid tribute to his endeavours. "[Chapman's suicide] was a last sacrifice of a courageous and utterly English hero," she said, "a man who gave every ounce of his mental and physical strength to the cause he believed in, whose extraordinary bravery and tenacity were an inspiration to all who observed him."



This feature is an edited extract from *Jungle Soldier* by Brian Moynahan, published in the UK by Quercus, and available from both high-street and online book stores.

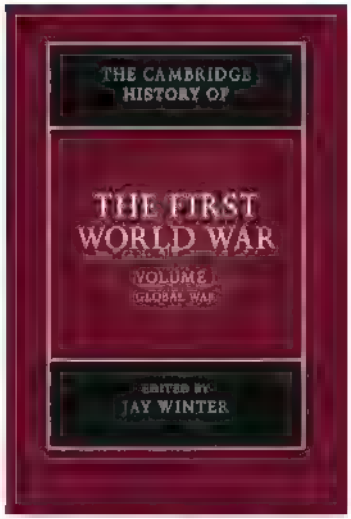
REVIEWS

History Of War casts its eye over the military-based **books, DVDs and games** that may or may not convince you to part with your cash this month

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: THREE-VOLUME HARDBACK SET

Various authors *Cambridge University Press* **RRP £240**

★★★★★



As the clock ticks down to the centenary of the start of the Great War, it's inevitable that there will be many books on the subject. None surely, though, will surpass this.

Bringing together 14 world-class historians from four different countries, this three-volume behemoth covers the conflict from a military, social, cultural, economic and political perspective. In short, it's as comprehensive a study of the origins of the war, its evolution and aftermath as has ever been put together.

It's impossible in this short review to do justice to the scale of this work, and a hearty slap on the back needs to go to Jay Winter, who edited it. Throughout, the writing is crisp, accessible and consistently entertaining, with the use of first person accounts – whether they be from letters or diaries – helping to drive home the individual human cost of a holocaust that started in a Sarajevo street one bright Sunday morning, and went on to plunge large areas of the globe into darkness.

So, a brief overview: Volume One, entitled *Global War*, explores the conflict from a military and diplomatic perspective, showing how imperialist aggression ensured that it spread from Europe into a worldwide catastrophe that changed the face of warfare and the political landscape forever. Volume Two, *The State*, concentrates on how the different political systems coped (or didn't) with the pressures of building – and losing – vast armies. Volume Three, *Civil Society*, concerns itself with the cultural impact of the savagery.

As you would expect, the work on the military and political aspects of the conflict is exemplary, but it's when topics as diverse as, say, the impact of the war on art or on medical procedures are explored that this really pushes beyond what one has come to expect from a single historical work.

The judicious use of pictures and photographs throughout the three volumes is also a masterstroke, not only providing doorways into all manner of engrossing and diverse topics, but also illustrating just how unbalanced our world became in those deeply troubled years. We have, for example, curios such as the cover of a tourist guide specifically designed for bored German soldiers occupying the Somme region in one volume. A photo in another shows turbaned Indian troops trundling towards the frontline in France on London double-decker buses. In a third, there's a photo of camels dragging sleighs of food through the snowy Russian wastes to relieve famine victims. Exploring this opus is often reminiscent of wandering around some vast, spectacular, weighty museum. Indeed, it's strange to think that a body of work so wonderful has been created about something so entirely dreadful.

The Cambridge History Of The First World War not only deserves to find a place in every university and school, but also on the shelves of anyone with an interest in the war that was supposed to end all wars. Utterly absorbing, endlessly fascinating, absolutely essential.

Nick Soldinger

It's strange to think that a body of work so wonderful has been created about something so entirely dreadful

THE GREAT WAR SEEN FROM THE AIR

Various authors *Yale University Press* **RRP £40**

★★★★★

During the First World War, aerial photographs were taken on a large scale, enabling military Commanders to detect enemy locations and intentions. Many of those photos are now being revealed for the first time in this book, providing a valuable source of information for archaeologists, historians and landscape researchers

The pictures, chosen from a database containing more than 20,500 images, come complete with information on the battle that occurred in that particular area, along with (in some cases) a traced map of each army's positions, which can be placed over the photographic image to provide context.

There are also smaller photographic excerpts detailing buildings and structures that were in some way connected to that particular story. In one example, we see a micro-dot that we're told is a church destroyed during the Battle of the Yser. There's a certain poignancy in not being able to see the damage – in a way, it emphasises how such devastating losses became seemingly trivial during the course of the war.

One of the most fascinating inclusions in the book is a double-page, German panoramic photograph taken of Potize-Ypres-De Klyte after the Spring Offensive of 1918. Incorporating a dotted line to chronicle the movement of Kaiser Wilhelm's army, it demonstrates the sheer number of miles traversed by each side in the conflict.

Helpfully, the photographs are also presented in chronological order, enabling us to better understand how the war developed and how areas of land were conquered by each side.

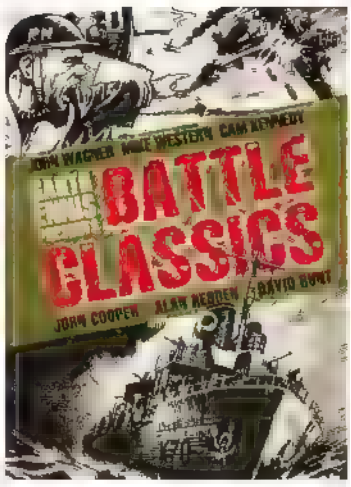
Many of these photos are being revealed for the first time, providing a valuable source of information for archaeologists, historians and landscape researchers

With fantastic picture quality throughout, as well as inspirational quotes from the chief protagonists and an abundance of well researched historical information, *The Great War Seen From The Air: In Flanders Fields 1914 1918* is a weighty and worthy book to have in your collection – not just because it provides an awe-inspiring new angle on the war (literally) with which to reinforce your military knowledge, but also because it provides a fascinating record of the technology of the day and how it was exploited. **Chris Short**

GARETH ENNIS PRESENTS BATTLE CLASSICS

Garth Ennis *Titan Books* **RRP £19.99**

★★★★



Published weekly between 1975 and 1988, *Battle* remains one of the most influential comics of all time. This book, compiled by fan Gareth Ennis – himself a comic writer – brings together some of the author's favourite stories from the publication's heyday.

His choices include "HMS Nightshade", where young British sailors face the extreme, cold terrors of the Atlantic, and "The Generals Dies At Dawn", which sees Otto von Margen – one of Hitler's Generals – recounting his memoirs while awaiting his appointment with the firing squad. Also included are three short stories, including the renowned "Private Loser".

This collection serves as a perfect introduction to a new generation of a legendary magazine that held the interests of so many children and adults decades ago With huge, glossy pages and hundreds of high-quality, black and-white depictions of war, it will appeal to military buffs and lovers of beautiful artwork alike. **Chris Short**

WIN! A copy of *Garth Ennis Presents Battle Classics*

***History Of War* has two copies of this fantastic book to give away. To stand a chance of winning one, simply answer the following question correctly:**

Q In what year did the First World War begin?

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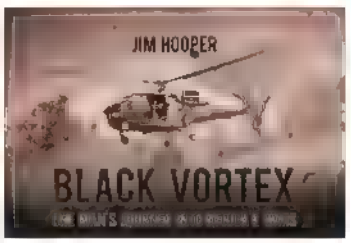
BLACK VORTEX

Jim Hooper *Helion and Co* **RRP £35**

★★★



Going about our everyday lives, it's sometimes easy to forget that in some parts of the planet, war is a way of life

Which is precisely why renowned US photojournalist and author Jim Hooper has spent the past three decades in some of the poorest countries of the Third World, recording the crises that have ravaged the spirit and innocence of the native people. With the critically acclaimed books *Koevoet!* and *A Hundred Feet Over Hell* already under his belt – which chronicled the South African Bush War and his brother's service as a pilot in Vietnam respectively – he ventured into the heart of Africa to play a fly on the wall of four of the continent's deadliest conflicts: Namibia/Koevoet; Angola/Unita; Sierra Leone and Sudan/the SPLA.

Almost as horrific as the photographs of mangled bodies, airborne missiles and flaming mortar carriages is the sheer matter-of-factness displayed by the live observers to each incident for these guys, many of whom have been thrust headlong into military service as children, murder and destruction are no longer a big deal; they're just another day at the office.

I can't help feeling that a little more description and anecdote would have given the book greater longevity With just small accounts of his experience within each of the battle zones, Hooper has clearly decided to let the pictures do the talking. Which is all well and good (this is photojournalism, after all), but his work – at times blurry, at times a little mundane – doesn't always warrant a second visit.

That said, in several cases, *Black Vortex: One Man's Journey Into Africa's Wars* succeeds in opening the eyes and chilling the soul to the very bones. Credit must be given to Hooper's courage and conviction in carrying out his art, and this latest work will doubtless inspire the next generation of reportage students **Paul Dimery**

MEDAL YEARBOOK 2014

John W & Philip Mussell *Token Publishing* **RRP £19.95**

★★★

Not surprisingly on this, the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, Token's annual *Medal Yearbook* features a poignant cover devoted to the "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred" campaign medals and memorial plaque of that conflict. But as usual, there's so much more to this 600-page handbook: 15 chapters devoted to different types of medals, including those from the Commonwealth and the Irish Republic, as well as Police and life-saving examples.

There are sections devoted to opinion, medal ribbons, the collecting of medals and the values medals are currently achieving at auctions and antiques shops. The book also contains advertising from nationwide sale rooms and valuers that specialise in military collectables of this nature. However, *Medal Yearbook 2014* is not solely a trade book, because of the comprehensive information it provides about each featured medal and how service personnel became eligible for it.

For example, the Africa Star – one of nine British campaign medals – was awarded to those troops who fought in the Second World War Africa campaign of 1940-43. Specifically, it was given to those who served in an operational area of North Africa between 10 July 1940 (the date of Italy's declaration of war) and 12 May 1943 (the end of operations there). It was also awarded to those who served in Abyssinia, Eritrea, Somalia and Malta. Further detail in the book explains the silver 1 and 8 numerals of the First and Eighth Armies on the ribbon for service between 23 October and 23 May 1942.

Medals from more recent conflicts are explained in similarly great detail, with, for example, entries for the South Atlantic Medal, the Gulf Medal and the Iraq Medal – from the Falklands, Gulf and Iraq Wars of 1982, 1992 and 2004 respectively.

It's fair to say that, as well as providing indications of medals' values, the book provides more than a glimpse into the stories behind medals from the 18th Century to the present day. The same can be said of the descriptions of the gallantry medals awarded during the same period. This reviewer believes that the story behind the medals and their link with turbulent periods of history are more important than their monetary values.

The book provides more than a glimpse into the stories behind medals from the 18th Century to the present day

For example, 120mm-diameter bronze memorial plaques issued to mark the death of male British soldiers during the course of the First World War are valued "from £50", but the fact that 1,335,000 were minted and all individually named tells a completely different story about the scale of the conflict that started 100 years ago. **John Carroll**

THEIRS NOT TO REASON WHY

Graham Winton *Helion and Co* **RRP £37.50**

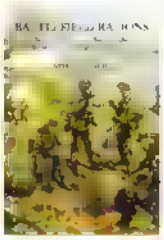
★★★

The horse as a vehicle of war has a history that is almost as long as that of armed combat itself – though it wasn't until the late 19th Century that the British Army formed a dedicated organisation for the monitoring and purchase of horses for military purposes the Central Remount and Veterinary Services. Graham Winton's 500-page tome starts with the creation of this faculty in 1878, then traces the role of the steed throughout the Anglo-Boer and First World Wars. It's a fascinating, if rather studious, read where incredible amounts of research and considerable knowledge have been engaged and employed. Whereas Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse* brought the plight of horses for military purposes to the fore, this book provides the back story and an extreme level of detail. If you have a passion for combat history and an interest in all things equestrian, this should be your one-stop shop. **Paul Pettengale**

BATTLEFIELD RATIONS

Anthony Clayton *Helion and Co* **RRP £16.95**

★★★★



While rationing may seem like a distant concept to many of us, it wasn't so long ago that it was a way of life – especially for British troops. In this book, Anthony Clayton provides a number of eye-opening accounts of the hardships that many soldiers faced during the turmoil of war.

Starting with the second Boer War of 1899-1902, he emphasises the importance of morale in the field of battle, and how food has played a huge part in this. Even a simple brew of tea could provide momentary respite – even if the tea was sometimes prepared in an old meat tin and heated with a candle!

Covering eight wars leading up to the present Afghanistan conflict, Clayton provides intricate details on the methods used to prepare food, and the differences between male and female rationing. In places, it's awkwardly written, with broken sentences that force you to read the same sentence more than once, but there's enough here to provide food for thought. **Chris Short**

LENINGRAD

Brian Moynahan *Quercus* **RRP £25**

★★★★★

The siege of Leningrad – in which the German army devastated the city over the course of three years, from 1941 to 1944 – is often overlooked when it comes to Second World War history. But renowned historian Brian Moynahan makes amends here with an astonishing book that incorporates the biography of Russian composer Shostakovich and his Seventh Symphony against a savage backdrop of cannibalism, starvation and hypothermia.

While the book is on the lengthy side at just over 500 pages, it makes for effortless reading as the engrossing and entirely harrowing details of the siege unfold. Moynahan has left no stone unturned in his research, drawing on extensive archives, personal letters/diaries and eye-witness accounts. The result is a truly humbling experience. **Chris Short**

Buy next month's issue of History Of War to read an exclusive extract from Brian Moynahan's Leningrad

COUNTRYMEN

Bo Lidegaard *Atlantic Books* **RRP £22**

★★★★★

Over 14 days in October 1943, nearly 8,000 Jews were smuggled out of Denmark by ordinary citizens sympathetic to their plight, right under the noses of the country's Nazi occupiers. This book tells the remarkable story of that incredible exodus, gathering together numerous eyewitness accounts, letters, maps and photographs – much of which has been previously unavailable to the public. Written by the award-winning Bo Lidegaard, Editor-in-Chief of Danish newspaper *Politiken* and a best selling author of several history books, *Countrymen* is a real page-turner, at once fascinating and heartbreakingly poignant, while remaining accessible throughout. At £22, it doesn't come particularly cheap, but then you do get plenty for your buck: namely, a book that marries the emotion of a tragic romance with the high suspense of an espionage novel. *Countrymen* is essential reading matter for anyone with a pulse. **Paul Dimery**

STRIKE BACK: SHADOW WARFARE DVD

Directed by Michael J Bassett, Julian Holmes, Paul Wilmshurst *2entertain* **RRP £17**

★★★☆☆

The fourth series in the successful (and explosive) American-British drama sees Sergeants Michael Stonebridge (Philip Winchester) and Damien Scott (Sullivan Stapleton) spending their leave in a testosterone-fuelled manner, riding their loud, high-horsepower motorbikes through California. Cue a rude interruption in the form of a US Army helicopter landing next to them on the highway, informing them that their holiday is over and that they must help deal with drug-dealing terrorists in Colombia.

What follows is a ten-part series of high drama, nudity and adrenaline that spans three continents. It's not particularly clever, with shoot-outs taking place on every street corner, with no apparent repercussions for the gunmen involved. And you're asked to suspend belief when the soldiers are administered yellow fever and typhoid jabs just hours before descending into the Colombian jungle. But the characters are certainly colourful – especially Agent Dalton, portrayed by Rhona Mitra, who gives orders to anybody who'll listen, before quietly popping pills when no one is looking. Our very own Robson Green makes an appearance and, while his character won't win any awards for charisma, even he has his moments of absurd believability.

But let's not pick it apart too much: *Strike Back* delivers exactly what it intends to. It's an action-packed, muscle-rippling rush packed with explosives, rocket-launchers and humorous camaraderie between the main characters. Think James Bond without the sophistication. **Chris Short**

SPIRITS OF THE SOMME DVD

Directed by Bob Carruthers

Beckmann Visual Publishing **RRP £8**

★★★★★

The first day of July 1916 will go down as one of the darkest days in the history of the British Army. It was the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, and some 60,000 men lost their lives. To put that into perspective, that's more than 12 times the number of people who perished in the World Trade Center attacks of 2001.

As the opening scenes of this major new documentary – from the Emmy award-winning makers of *Battlefield* and *Weapons Of War* – kick in, it's hard to comprehend the events that happened next. In awe-inspiring clarity, we see hundreds of British squaddies cheerily marching, in that slightly sped-up manner befitting the silent comedies of the period, and it all seems very light-hearted and genteel. But as presenter/director Bob Carruthers explains, Allied plans quickly went awry and the result was a massacre.

Clever editing beautifully contrasts the horror of that day with the serenity of the battlefield as it looks today, and Carruthers helpfully goes into great detail to describe why it all went so horribly wrong. But the main reason for buying this DVD is undoubtedly the aforementioned footage – rare and drawn from both British and German forces, it transports you straight into the trenches, and you can almost see the pimples on the young soldiers' faces.

In this, the centenary year of the start of the First World War, this almost painfully haunting documentary is an absolute must addition to your DVD collection. **Paul Dimery**

THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT DVD/BLU-RAY

Directed by Paul Ziller

Anchor Bay **RRP £8**

★★★☆☆

The Philadelphia Experiment is the equivalent of Area 51: a rumour and little more. It was supposedly a secret attempt, in 1943, to cloak a US warship (USS Eldridge) so that it was invisible to radar, utilising Einstein's unified-field theory. The US denies that it ever happened, though it's managed to spawn two movies – one in 1984, made for theatrical release, and a sequel (2013) for TV only. Both are included here, though it's the latter that's billed as the premier event. Both films are entertaining, if flawed, suggesting that the technology employed caused a rift in time and space, which resulted in naval offices from the Eldridge being cast into the modern day. The 2013 effort is a gung-ho affair with highly clichéd takes on the US Government and conspiracy. It's all good fun, but take with a large pinch of salt. **Paul Pettengale**

SAVING GENERAL YANG DVD/BLU-RAY

Directed by Ronnie Yu

Universal Pictures **RRP £11**

★★★☆☆

No, it's not a Chinese remake of *Saving Private Ryan* (more's the pity), but this film – based on a collection of legendary Chinese folklore called "Generals Of The Yang" – certainly tries its best to be as epic as Steven Spielberg's 1998 multi-Oscar-winner. The story centres around a group of warrior sons who, with the blessing of their mother, attempt to rescue their General father from imprisonment by a rival army, and the ensuing battle sequences are beautifully choreographed in that slighly dreamy, slow-mo style that we first saw employed in Ang Lee's majestic 2000 work *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The film is let down by subtitles that change too quickly to allow you to follow what's going on, while the war scenes are too bloodless to be truly realistic. But *Saving General Yang* works fine as an untaxing, and slightly different, combat movie. **Paul Dimery**

FRENCH BRITISH WARS

App *Kulfun Games*

Free

★★★★☆

While this addictive military-strategy app isn't strictly new, it's recently been improved with a bunch of fixes and new additions to make the gaming experience that much better – and even more addictive. These include the addition of rock and wood storage buildings, and the increased health of French troops. For anyone who doesn't know, *French British Wars* is set in the mid-18th Century, back in the days when George II and Louis XV were at each other's throats in an attempt to build an Empire. Taking control of one or the other, you get to build civilisations and plan sieges on your enemy's interests – and how often do you get to say that? **Paul Dimery**

RISE OF FLIGHT: CHANNEL BATTLES EDITION

PC game *Excalibur*

RRP £40

★★★★☆

Now that the centenary of the start of the First World War is upon us, there's no better time to settle down in front of your PC and take control of a canvas-and-wood fighter plane in an aerial battle over the Western Front. This latest addition to the long-running and brilliant series gives you the opportunity to extend your theatre of combat to the English Channel (or, rather, above it). As well as getting a series of daring new missions (and they're even more daring when there's nothing but sea below), you get the choice of 25 additional aircraft alongside the ten that were on offer previously – all of which are authentically detailed with accurate weapons and cockpits, ensuring the most realistic experience possible. What's more, you can either engage in a dogfight against the computer or invite your friends to take you on. Just remember, it's only a game. **Paul Dimery**

WAR in NUMBERS

THE KOREAN WAR

How the 1950-1953 conflict between **North Korea** and the **UN-supported South** adds up*

95,700

The number of United Nations troops killed in the war. A further 200,000 were wounded.

2 years and 17 days

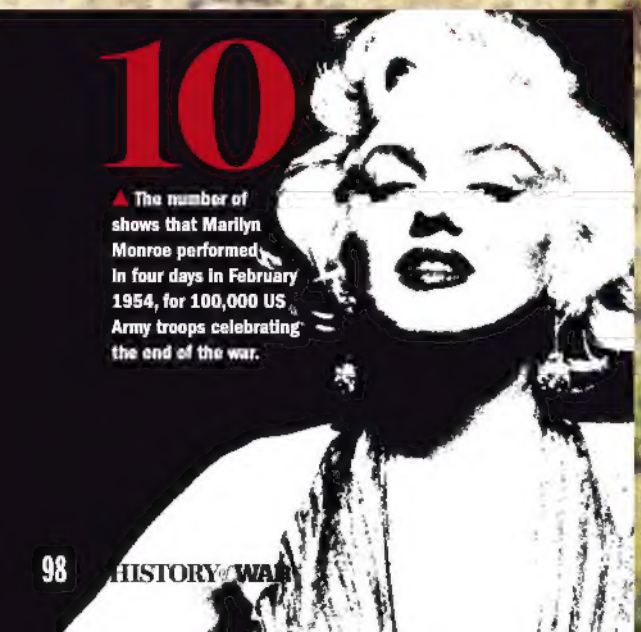
The amount of time the two sides spent engaged in truce talks (during this period, there were 575 meetings). Finally, an armistice was signed on 27 July 1953.

12-20%

The percentage the population of North Korea declined by during the war, from around nine million to less than eight million.

10

The number of shows that Marilyn Monroe performed in four days in February 1954, for 100,000 US Army troops celebrating the end of the war.



625

The nickname given to the war by South Koreans, in reference to the start date of 25 June.

After the war, six US troops willingly crossed the DMZ (demilitarised zone) and pledged their allegiance to North Korea. One of these, James Joseph Dresnok, has since been a regular in propaganda films, often portraying villainous American characters.

635,000

The tons of bombs that were dropped by the US in Korea.

7,245

The number of US prisoners of war taken during the conflict. Of those, 2,806 died whilst in captivity.

171,000

The number of Korean War veterans who also served in both the Second World War and Vietnam.

133

The number of Medals of Honor that were awarded for heroism in the Korean War, 95 of them posthumously.

0

The number of victors in the war, since technically it's still ongoing (a peace treaty was never signed – only a ceasefire was agreed upon).

$67 BILLION

How much the United States spent on fighting the conflict – that's approximately $535billion in today's terms.

The total number of troops – from both sides – who fought during the Korean conflict.

The lowest-recorded temperature during the Korean War. In the first winter of the war alone, some 5,300 US soldiers died from frostbite, while a further 18,000 suffered from frostbite-related injuries.

*Statistic may vary from source to source

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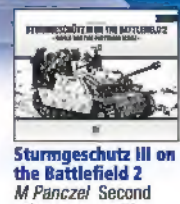

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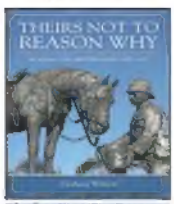

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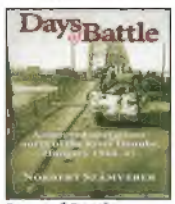

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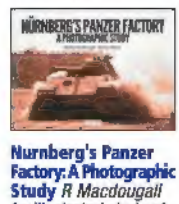

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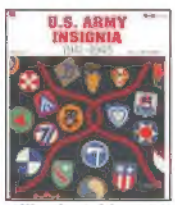

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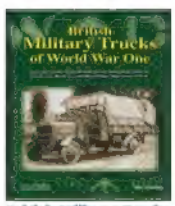

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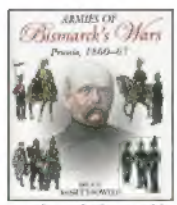

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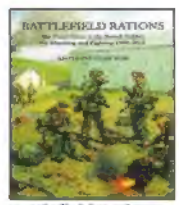

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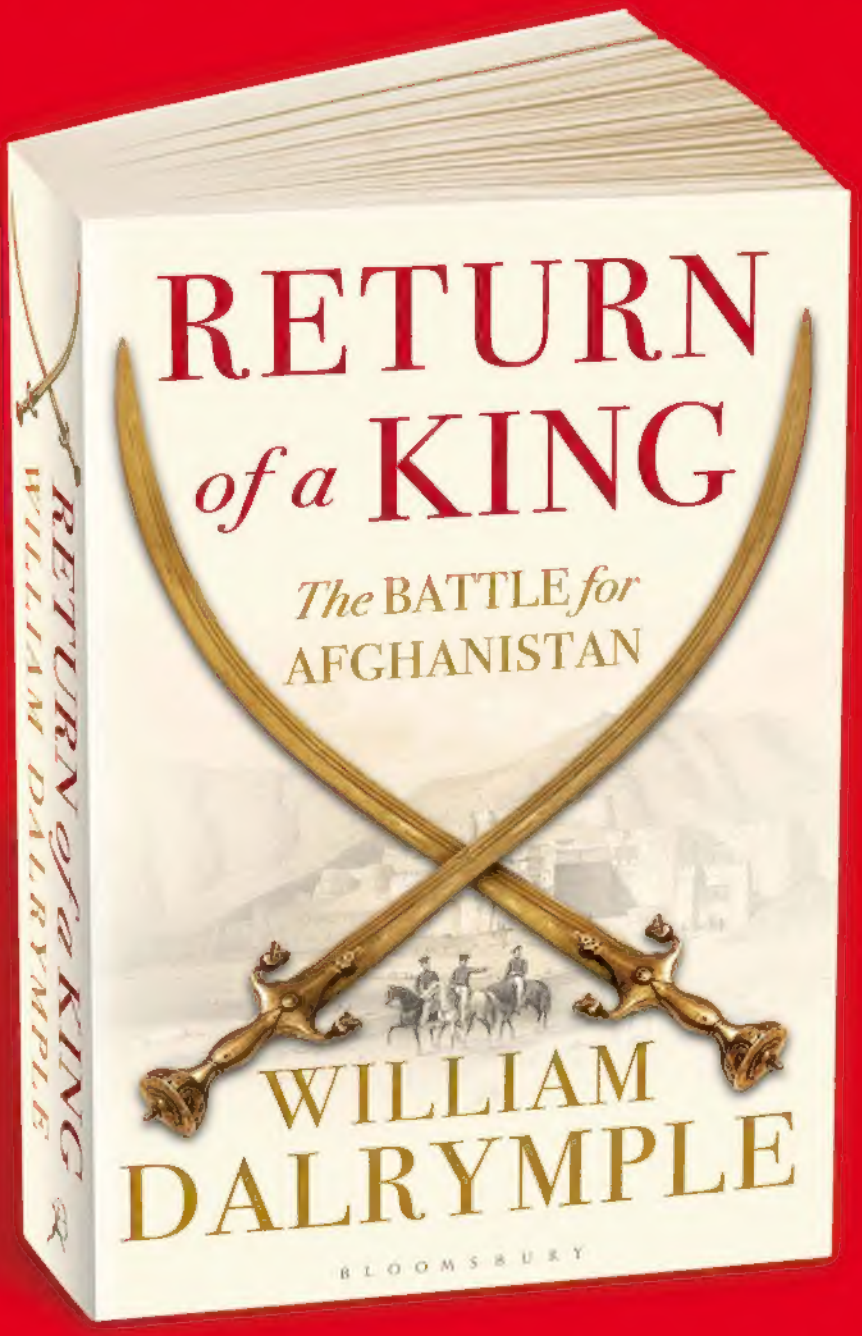

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